THE

SYSTEM OF DOCTRINES,

CONTAINED IN

DIVINE REVELATION,

EXPLAINED AND DEFENDED.

Showing their CONSISTENCE and CONNECTION with each other.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A *TREATISE* ON THE *MILLENNIUM.*

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ERRATA.

Page 2, line 6 from bot. for *poſſeſſes* read *profeſſes*		Page 40, line 3 from b. for *myſteries* r. *myſterious*	
3,	18, 19, 20, for *ſhall* r. *ſhalt*. line 24, for *poſſeſſed* r. *profeſſed*	57,	7 from b. for *when* r. *whom*
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10,	23, for *here* r. *there*	105,	14, after and r. *ſalvation is*
13,	17, for *loving* r. *living*. l. 22, for *live* r. *life*	314,	19, for *rejected* r. *neglected*
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THE

SYSTEM of DOCTRINES

CONTAINED IN

DIVINE REVELATION.

PART II.

CHAP. IV.

SECTION VI.

Concerning Saving Faith.

THERE have been, and ſtill are, various and oppoſite opinions in the chriſtian world, and among Proteſtants, reſpecting ſaving faith; and very different diffinitions have been given of it. Inſtead of particularly deſcribing theſe, and attempting to refute any of them now, it is propoſed to examine the ſcriptures, and endeavour from them to find what is the nature, and what are the properties of this faith. And if in this way, which is doubtleſs the moſt proper to be taken, a clear and ſatisfactory idea of this ſubject may be obtained, all erro-

neous

neous opinions reſpecting it, which have been imbibed and propagated, will of courſe be detected.—In this view, the following things may be obſerved.

I. SAVING faith is repreſented in many paſſages of ſcripture as conſiſting in a belief and aſſurance of the truth and reality of thoſe things which are revealed and aſſerted by God in the divine oracles. Or a conviction and aſſured knowledge, that the goſpel is true; that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world; and they who have this belief, aſſurance or knowledge, are conſidered and declared to be in a ſtate of ſalvation.

This is the account given of faith in the moſt expreſs definition of it in the Bible. "Now faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not ſeen*." Here faith is deſcribed in the general nature of it; and is ſaid to be that by which inviſible and future things are ſeen as evident realities. Hence it appears, that he who realizes and is aſſured of the truths contained in divine revelation, has true faith, by which men believe to the ſaving of their ſouls, which is the faith here defined, as appears from the words immediately preceding theſe, in the laſt verſe of the foregoing chapter. "We are of them that believe to the ſaving of the ſoul. Now faith, &c."

When Peter ſaid to Jeſus, "Thou art the Chriſt, the Son of the living God," Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, "Bleſſed art thou, Simon Barjona; for fleſh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee; but my Father which is in heaven." Upon this we may obſerve,

1. That the faith which Peter poſſeſſes, is a belief and aſſurance that Jeſus of Nazareth was indeed the Son of God, the Meſſiah who was to come into the world.

2. That Chriſt declares this to be ſaving faith, in pronouncing Peter bleſſed upon this, and aſſerting that this faith was the effect of divine, ſupernatural influences.

Very

* Heb. xi. 1.

Very parallel to this is what St. John aſſerts concerning faith. "Whoſoever ſhall confeſs that Jeſus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."* This is the ſame confeſſion which Peter made; and this is here declared to be peculiar to a good man, a true chriſtian who ſhall be ſaved. By confeſſing that Jeſus is the Son of God, is meant a ſincere and true declaration, of a belief and aſſurance of this truth. Such a belief and aſſurance of this truth, is the only proper ground of this confeſſion, and is ſaving faith. Both theſe paſſages are explained and illuſtrated by the following words of this ſame Apoſtle. "Whoſoever believeth that Jeſus is the Chriſt, is born of God."† Here a belief of this ſingle propoſition, *Jeſus is the Chriſt*, is aſſerted to be juſtifying, ſaving faith, which is peculiar to thoſe who are born of God.

The ſame deſcription of ſaving faith is found in the words of St. Paul, "If thou ſhall confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus; and ſhall believe in thine heart that God raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhall be ſaved."‡ To believe that Jeſus was raiſed from the dead, is the ſame with believing that Jeſus is the Chriſt: And this is here aſſerted to be ſaving faith. This ſame faith the Eunuch poſſeſſed, upon which he was baptized by Philip, and admitted among the number of true believers in Chriſt. "And he anſwered and ſaid, I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God."§ Agreeably to this Chriſt ſays, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent."‖ Here eternal life is connected with having a true idea or knowledge of God and the Saviour; or ſeeing their true character and believing them to be ſuch as they are. This therefore muſt be the ſame with that faith to which our Saviour ſo often promiſes ſalvation; and,

* 1 John iv. 15. † Chap. v. 1. ‡ Rom. x. 9. § Acts viii. 37.
‖ John xvii. 3.

and without which he repeatedly ſaid, men cannot be ſaved.

In all theſe paſſages faith is repreſented as that by which the truth is ſeen, ſo that the truths of the goſpel become preſent and real to the mind, attended with an aſſurance of their truth and reality: And that this belief of the truth, with what it neceſſarily includes, is the whole of ſaving faith: And is the ſame thing which is elſewhere called—*Coming to the light.** *Being in the light.*† *Knowing the truth.*‡ *Coming to the knowledge of the truth.*§ *A belief of the truth.*‖ *A being illuminated.*¶ *The light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt, ſhining in the heart.*** *Beholding as in a glaſs, the glory of the Lord.*††

II. SAVING faith, in a number of places, is repreſented in a light, which to ſome, eſpecially at firſt view, may appear different from the deſcription of it in the forementioned paſſages, if not contrary to it. It is conſidered and repreſented, as conſiſting in the exerciſe of the heart, and choice of the will; this being eſſential to it, and including the whole.

Believing on the name of Chriſt, and *receiving him*, is mentioned as being one and the ſame thing, "But to as many as *received him*, to them gave he power to become the ſons of God, even to them that *believe on his name.*"‡‡ Here receiving Chriſt, and *believing on him*, are ſynonimous expreſſions, and muſt mean the ſame thing. But receiving Chriſt is an exerciſe of will or choice, and is the ſame thing with voluntarily embracing him, as he is offered in the goſpel. Faith in Chriſt, or believing on him, is termed *coming to him*, as being one and the ſame. "He that *cometh to me*, ſhall never hunger;

* John iii. 21. † 1 John ii. 9. ‡ John viii. 31. § 1 Tim. ii. 4. ‖ 2 Theſſ. ii. 13. ¶ Heb. x. 32. ** 2 Cor. iv. 6. †† Chap. iii. 18. ‡‡ John i. 12.

hunger; and he that *believeth on me*, ſhall never thirſt."* As hungering and thirſting are the ſame mental exerciſe, ſo are believing on Chriſt, and coming to him. This is farther evident from the words following. "But I ſaid unto you, that ye alſo have ſeen me, and *believe not*. All that the Father give thme, ſhall come to me; and he that *cometh to me*, I will in no wiſe caſt out."† Here Chriſt ſpeaks of *coming to him*, as the condition of ſalvation by him, and as directly the reverſe to *not believing on him*, with which he charges the Jews; and therefore by coming to him he can mean nothing but ſaving faith, even the ſame which he, in this diſcourſe, repeatedly calls *believing on him*.‡ It may be alſo obſerved, that what Chriſt here calls *not believing*, he in another place denotes by *not coming to him*. "Ye will not *come unto me*, that ye might have life."§ The charge of *not coming to him*, and *not believing on him*, is evidently the ſame. And that coming to Chriſt, is the ſame with believing on him, is confirmed from the evident ſynonimous uſe of thoſe phraſes in the words which follow thoſe which have been mentioned. "And this is the will of the Father, that every one that ſeeth the Son and *believeth on him*, may have everlaſting life. No man can *come unto me*, except the Father which hath ſent me, draw him. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, *cometh unto me*. Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, he *that believeth on me*, hath everlaſting live."¶ And we find him ſpeaking again after the ſame manner. "If any man thirſt, let him *come unto me* and drink. He that *believeth on me*, as the ſcripture hath ſaid, out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living waters."**

Faith in Chriſt is denoted by *eating his fleſh*, and *drinking his blood*.†† "Whoſoever eateth my fleſh, and

* John vi. 35. † v. 36, 37. ‡ v. 35, 40, 47. § Chap. v. 40.
¶ v. 40, 44, 45, 47. ** John vii. 37, 38. †† John vi. 50, 51, 53, 54, 56, 57, 58.

and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day." It is not only evident from the words themſelves, that by eating his fleſh, and drinking his blood, that uniting act of the ſoul to Chriſt is expreſſed, which is neceſſary in order to enjoy what he has obtained for men, which muſt be ſaving faith: But this is yet more evident by comparing them with the foregoing words, of which theſe are evidently deſigned as an explanation. "Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlaſting life."* And again, "This is the will of him that ſent me, that every one that ſeeth the Son, and *believeth on him*, may have everlaſting life; and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day."† Here eternal life, and to be raiſed up by Chriſt at the laſt day, is promiſed in one place to believing on Chriſt, and in the other to *eating his fleſh, and drinking his blood*: therefore it is certain that theſe are not two different things, but one and the ſame, which is connected with eternal life, and the condition of enjoying it. But eating the fleſh of Chriſt, and drinking his blood, can mean nothing leſs than voluntary exerciſe, by which, from a taſte and reliſh for the character of Chriſt, and his excellence, the heart receives and embraces him as a ſuitable and all ſufficient Saviour.

Calling on the name of Chriſt, is ſpoken of as an exerciſe of faith, or a proper expreſſion of faith in him. For the ſcripture ſaith, "Whoſoever *believeth on him* ſhall not be aſhamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the ſame Lord over all is rich unto all that *call upon him*. For whoſoever ſhall *call upon the name of the Lord*, ſhall be ſaved."‡ No one who attends to theſe words can ſuppoſe that believing on Chriſt, and calling on his name, are two diſtinct things, or doubt whether they are one and the ſame exerciſe.

To

* v. 47. † v. 40. ‡ Rom. x. 11, 12, 13.

To the ſame purpoſe are thoſe ſcriptures which repreſent faith in Chriſt by *looking unto him*, and *truſting in him*. "Look unto me, all the ends of the earth, and be ye ſaved."* Here looking to Chriſt, and ſalvation, are connected. And this is repreſented as neceſſary to ſalvation, and the only condition of it. But this is the ſame thing with ſeeking him, coming to him, and accepting of him. In this paſſage there is doubtleſs a reference to the direction which God gave to the Iſraelites to ſet a brazen ſerpent upon a pole, in the wilderneſs, with a promiſe that every one who being bitten of a fiery ſerpent, looked upon it, ſhould live: For this was a deſigned type of Chriſt, which our Saviour therefore applies to himſelf: and at the ſame time declares that looking upon the exalted ſerpent, denoted faith in him. "And as Moſes lifted up the ſerpent in the wilderneſs, even ſo muſt the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoſoever *believeth in him*, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life."†

Truſting in God, is often mentioned in the book of Pſalms, and in other parts of the Old Teſtament, as neceſſary in order to enjoy his favour, to which promiſes of all good are made; in the ſame manner as faith in Chriſt is in the New Teſtament: from whence it may be ſafely inferred that they are the ſame. And agreeable to this, believing in Chriſt is called *truſting in him*, by St. Paul. "That we ſhould be to the praiſe of his glory, who firſt *truſted in Chriſt*."‡ "Iſaiah ſaith, there ſhall be a root of Jeſſe, and he that ſhall riſe to reign over the Gentiles, in him ſhall the Gentiles *truſt*."§ *Truſt in Chriſt*, implies the exerciſe of the diſpoſition or will, even the receiving and embracing of the heart: For men do not truſt in any perſon or object for any thing but that which to them is a GOOD, what is agreeable to them, what they deſire and chooſe. Yea, *truſting*

* Iſaiah xlv. 22. † John iii. 14, 15. ‡ Eph. i. 12. § Rom. xv. 12.

ing is commonly uſed with reſpect to ſome great good upon which men ſet their hearts, and depend upon it for ſupport, ſatisfaction and happineſs. And that truſting in Chriſt is the ſame with looking and coming to him, and ſeeking him, will be evident from the laſt mentioned paſſage, by turning to the words of Iſaiah, from which it is taken: For what the Apoſtle renders, "In him ſhall the Gentiles *truſt*," is in the following words in the place quoted, "To it (that is to Chriſt) ſhall the Gentiles *ſeek*."

From theſe paſſages of ſcripture, and many others of the like tenor, it may be determined with certainty, that ſaving faith implies the conſent of the will, accepting of Chriſt; chooſing and embracing him, as he is revealed in the goſpel; and that this is eſſential to it; ſo that where this exerciſe and conſent of heart is not, there is no faith, and no real and proper conviction, knowledge or belief of the truth.

And if what has been ſaid in the foregoing ſection, on divine illumination, be underſtood, and kept in mind, the account we have had of ſaving faith from the ſcripture, under the two preceding obſervations, will appear to be conſiſtent and intelligible. It has been there proved from ſcripture, that a right diſpoſition of mind is neceſſary in order to have that true diſcerning in things of a moral and ſpiritual nature which is implied in ſaving faith; and that ſeeing and underſtanding the truths of the goſpel, implies exerciſe of heart, and the former cannot be diſtinguiſhed and ſeparated from the latter, even in idea and conception. Therefore a ſaving belief of the truth of the goſpel, ſuppoſes and implies right exerciſes of heart, in taſting and reliſhing moral beauty, and embracing it as good and excellent: and thus embracing Chriſt and the goſpel implies all that light, conviction and aſſurance of the truth, which is

eſſential

eſſential to ſaving faith; and both theſe, or rather *all this*, is really but one and the ſame whole.

The goſpel is all of a *moral* nature; by it is exhibited the plan of the moral government of God, or his moral, ſpiritual kingdom, to the beſt advantage, in the cleareſt and moſt ſtriking light. In *this*, is the greateſt and moſt clear manifeſtation of the Deity; and it compriſes the ſum of all the moral beauty and excellence that is to be ſeen by created intelligences, in the whole univerſe. In Jeſus Chriſt, the glory of God, his moral beauty and perfection, ſhines with the brighteſt effulgence, and to the greateſt advantage. The glory of God, the bright emanation of the divine fullneſs, beauty and perfection, is to be ſeen in the face of Jeſus Chriſt.* He is the image of God. In him, as in a mirrour, the rays of the divine glory center, and by him are to the greateſt advantage reflected on all finite intelligences. He therefore, who ſees Jeſus Chriſt in his true character, as a beautiful, ſuitable and all ſufficient Saviour, or underſtands the goſpel, ſees and underſtands what is the ſum of all moral beauty and perfection; which is the glory of the goſpel, and infinitely diſtinguiſhes it from every thing which is merely human, or is not divine; and without which the goſpel would be infinitely unworthy of God, and want the evidence which the believer has that it is from God. Therefore he who diſcerns not this moral beauty and excellence, which is the ſame with having no taſte of heart for it, the goſpel is hid from him. He does not underſtand it; has no true idea of Jeſus Chriſt; and conſequently diſcerns not the proper and all convincing evidence that he is the Son of God, and a ſuitable and all ſufficient Saviour: Therefore does not, and cannot believe it, with that faith which it demands.

But

* 2 Cor. iv. 6.

But ſuch a true idea of Jeſus Chriſt, ſuch a knowledge of him in his true character, ſuch a ſight of his moral beauty and excellence, ſuppoſes, and takes place in the exerciſe of a right taſte and diſpoſition of heart, without which it cannot poſſibly be perceived. For, as has been proved, a diſcernining and ſight of beauty, eſpecially of moral beauty and excellence, depends upon the taſte and diſpoſition of the heart, and it cannot be diſcerned by the ſpeculative underſtanding, as diſtinct from the will, and independent of it. But ſuch taſte and diſpoſition of heart, which diſcerns the moral beauty and excellence of Chriſt and the goſpel, and opens to the mind the all convincing evidence of their reality, neceſſarily implies, and carries in it, approbation of the goſpel, and a cordial embracing it as excellent and divine, which is the ſame with receiving Jeſus Chriſt, and truſting in him as a worthy and all ſufficient Saviour.

All this, it is preſumed, has been made ſo evident in the forgoing ſection, from ſcripture and the reaſon and nature of things, that it is needleſs to enlarge on the ſubject here, or repeat what has been ſaid there. However, it may be proper to mention ſeveral paſſages of ſcripture, in addition to thoſe here cited, which repreſent that light, knowledge and belief reſpecting the truths of the goſpel, in which ſaving faith conſiſts, to imply a right temper of mind, which is the ſame with a benevolent heart, without which there can be no true light and diſcerning with reſpect to thoſe things; and therefore no ſaving faith.—And conſequently that an evil heart, that is, a rebellious diſobedient heart, under the power of ſelfiſhneſs, pride and luſt, does not, and cannot believe on Jeſus Chriſt, with that faith which is reaſonable, and which the goſpel requires.

Chriſt ſays to the unbelieving Jews, "How can ye believe which receive honour one of another, and ſeek not

the

the honour that cometh from God only?"* Here a ſelfiſh, proud, worldly ſpirit, which alienated them from God, and rendered them ſo unfriendly to him, as not to deſire the honour which he gives, is repreſented as inconſiſtent with believing on Chriſt, or a ſight of that evidence of the truth of the goſpel which is implied in ſaving faith. Therefore a contrary temper of mind to this is neceſſary in order to believe in Chriſt, and is implied in ſaving faith; which muſt be a benevolent, humble, ſpiritual diſpoſition, which is friendly to the divine character, and ſincerely deſires the ſpiritual bleſſings which he gives, the honour which cometh from God.—According to this, all the mere ſpeculative knowledge, all the light and conviction, relating to the truths of the goſpel, of which unrenewed men are capable, falls eſſentially ſhort of true faith in Chriſt; ſo that they are wholly deſtitute of any thing of the kind. Therefore men muſt have an obedient, holy diſpoſition of heart, in order to exerciſe ſaving faith. It is with ſuch a renewed heart that men believe unto righteouſneſs.† With ſuch an heart the Eunuch believed on Chriſt.‡ St. John aſſerts this in the ſtrongeſt terms, in the following words, "Whoſoever believeth that Jeſus is the Chriſt, is born of God."§ Thus faith in Chriſt implies renovation of heart, a right diſpoſition of mind. Where this is not, there can be no faith.

We find the ſame thing implied and inculcated in our Saviour's parable of the ſower, as he explains it.¶ He that received ſeed into good ground, is he who with an *honeſt and good heart*, heareth the word, underſtandeth, receiveth and keepeth it, and bringeth forth fruit with patience. Upon this it may be obſerved, that what is called *underſtanding the word*, by Matthew, is expreſſed by *receiving* it, by Mark. From hence it is certain, that underſtanding

* John v. 44. † Rom. x. 10. ‡ Acts viii. 37. § 1. John v. 1.
¶ Matth. xiii. 23. Mark iv. 20. Luke viii. 15.

underſtanding the word is the ſame with receiving it; or, at leaſt, that one implies the other. But *receiving* the word is an exerciſe of heart, which appears with great certainty from the words which Luke uſes, "Which in *an honeſt and good heart*, having heard the word, keep it." It is the honeſt and good heart which underſtands, receives and keeps the word; and he who has not ſuch an heart, that is, an upright and benevolent heart, does neither receive, nor underſtand it. It is needleſs perhaps to obſerve, that ſaving faith conſiſts in underſtanding or receiving the word, the truth of the goſpel, which, according to this repreſentation, is found in an honeſt and good heart, and in no other, and implies the upright, diſintereſted, benevolent exerciſes of ſuch a heart. Before we leave this paſſage, it may be uſeful to obſerve, that according to this repreſentation of our Saviour, the word of truth does not make the evil, hard, ſelfiſh heart, good; but where it finds ſuch an heart, it produces no ſaving good, but leaves it as bad as it finds it. The heart muſt firſt be made honeſt and good; for ſuch an heart only underſtands, receives, loves and keeps the truth, and brings forth good fruit; as the ſeed takes root ſo as to bring forth fruit, only in good ground.

The following words of Chriſt are to the ſame purpoſe, "If any man will do his will, he ſhall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of myſelf."* To underſtand the doctrine which Chriſt taught, to ſee the divine ſtamp which is upon it, and to know that it is of God, is the deſcription of ſaving faith, or the character of a true believer. They who have a heart to do the will of God, and none but ſuch, have this diſcerning of true faith. Such an heart therefore, or a diſpoſition and will, to do the will of God, is eſſential to ſaving faith. This is a diſcerning, wiſe and underſtanding heart, which ſees the evidence of divine truth, and knows it to be of God.

Whereas

* John vii. 17.

Whereas he whoſe heart oppoſes the revealed will of God, which requires LOVE, remains in darkneſs and unbelief.

It muſt be farther obſerved,

III. IT appears from the ſcriptures that LOVE is implied in ſaving faith, and is eſſential to it; ſo that where there is no holy love, there is no true faith. This is aſſerted by St. Paul; by which he diſtinguiſhes true faith from all counterfeits, in the following words. "In Jeſus Chriſt, neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but faith which worketh by love."* The Apoſtle does not here ſay, that faith *worketh love* or *produces it*, as if faith preceded, as the cauſe of love; and that love is connected with faith, and follows it, as the certain conſequence and effect of it. But he ſays, faith worketh BY love, as ſome machines move *by* wind or water, ſprings or weights. He aſſerts that love is the life and active nature of ſaving faith. By this it is a loving active faith; love being the life and ſoul of it; ſo that where there is no love, there can be no more than an inactive, dead faith. The Apoſtle James ſays, "As the body without the ſpirit is dead, ſo faith without works is dead alſo."† The operative nature of any thing, is the live of it. Things are ſaid to be alive, from the active nature which is obſerved to be in them. The active nature of man is the ſpirit which is in him: Therefore, as the body without the ſpirit is dead, ſo faith without a working nature is dead alſo. What this working nature, or active fruitful ſpirit is, which is in true faith, St. Paul tells us in the words before us: It is LOVE. Love is the ſpirit and life of faith by which it acts, and produces all its operations, and is diſtingniſhed from a ſpurious, dead faith. Theſe two Apoſtles perfectly agree in this point. According to them, that which diſtinguiſhes true ſaving faith,

* Gal. v. 6 † James ii. 26.

faith, from every kind of faith which is not ſo, is the life and operative nature of it, which conſiſts in true love.

And that St. Paul is to be underſtood as has been now explained, when he ſaid, "Faith worketh by love," is confirmed by his following words. "Though I have all faith, ſo that I could remove mountains, and have not love,* I am nothing."† Here he aſſerts, there can be no faith that is of any worth, where there is not love. It follows, that ſaving faith implies love, in the nature of it. No faith availeth any thing, but that living, active faith, to which love is eſſential, and of which it is the life and active nature. And when he goes on to ſay, "Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things,"‡ the moſt eaſy, natural and conſiſtent meaning of theſe words is thought to be, that love is the active nature and life of chriſtian fortitude, faith, hope and patience, that theſe chriſtian graces are exerciſed and maintained by love, which is the foundation and ſoul of the whole, ſo that where there is no love, there is nothing born, believed, hoped for, or endured, as chriſtians do. Love *believeth* all things, that is, every exerciſe of true faith, is an exerciſe of love; and he who has love, believeth all things which are the proper objects of faith, and ought to be believed. In this view we ſee the force and propriety of his concluding words, "And now abideth faith, hope, love, theſe three; but the greateſt of theſe is love." Love is the greateſt, as faith and hope are comprehended in love, as the active nature, life and eſſence of them.

That

*The word in the original is *love*; αγαπη, with its derivatives αγαπαω, and αγαπητος, is uſed above three hundred times in the New-Teſtament, and tranſlated *love*, *to love*, and *beloved*, except in about twenty places, beſides the inſtances in this chapter, where it is tranſlated *charity*; but ought to have been always tranſlated *love*.

† 1 Cor. xiii. 2. ‡ verſe 7.

That love comes into the eſſence of ſaving faith, will be evident by attending to a quotation of St. Paul from the Prophet Iſaiah.* The words of the Prophet are, "Men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear—what he hath prepared for him that *waiteth for him.*"† For which the Apoſtle uſes theſe words, "For them that *love him.*" Waiting on God, or waiting for him, in the Old Teſtament, is the ſame with faith and truſt in God; and therefore is the ſame with what is called faith or believing, in the New Teſtament. But for this, St. Paul uſes the word *love*, which he would not have done, had not love been ſo eſſential to faith, and ſo far implied in it, that to truſt or believe in God, and to love him, expreſs near the ſame idea, and are in a meaſure ſynonimous.

The words of Chriſt to Nicodemus repreſent love as implied in ſaving faith, and eſſential to it. "He that believeth on him, is not condemned: But he that believeth not, is condemned already, becauſe he hath not believed in the name of the only begotton Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved."‡ On theſe words may be obſerved the following things.

1. That our Saviour here repreſents men as condemned, or not, according as they believe on him, or not. He that believeth is not condemned: But he that believeth not is condemned.

2. That the ground of this condemnation is their *loving* darkneſs, and *hating* the light or truth. It follows from this, that loving darkneſs is the reaſon and ground of unbelief; and therefore that the love of the truth is neceſſary in order to believing on the Son of God, and

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* 1. Cor. ii. 9. † Iſaiah lxiv. 4. ‡ John iii. 18, 19, 20.

is implied in it. Yea, it appears from this repreſentation, that *loving* darkneſs rather than light, and ſo refuſing to come to the light, is unbelief itſelf. And therefore, coming to the truth in the love of it, or in the exerciſe of love, is ſaving faith.

This is very parallel with St. Paul's account of this matter. He ſays, "Becauſe they *received not the love of the truth*, that they might be ſaved. And for this cauſe God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſion, that they ſhould believe a lie: That they all might be damned, who *believe not the truth*, but *had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs*."* It appears from theſe words, that *not receiving the love of the truth*, or not loving the truth, and *not believing the truth*, are one and the ſame thing: And that *having pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs*, and believing the truth, are oppoſite to each other; therefore, *receiving the love of the truth*, or loving it, and *believing the truth*, are not diſtinct exerciſes, but one and the ſame.

What our Saviour ſays to the Jews, implies, that love to God is eſſential to ſaving faith. "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: If another ſhall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and ſeek not the honour that cometh from God only?"† Here Chriſt aſcribes their unbelief, and rejecting him, to their want of love to God; and ſpeaks of their *unbelief* as an evidence that they had no love. Therefore, love is here repreſented as ſo eſſential to faith, that where there is no love, there can be no faith. And faith is ſuch a concomitant of love, that where there is no faith, it is certain there is no love. And the laſt words do plainly aſſert, that it is impoſſible any one ſhould believe on Chriſt, who has no ſuitable reſpect or love to God.

Other

* 2 Theſſ. ii. 10, 11, 12. † John v. 42, 43, 44.

Other paſſages of ſcripture hold forth the ſame truth; but it is needleſs to mention them particularly, ſince thoſe which have been mentioned are ſo clear and expreſs on the point before us. And if this were not ſo, and there were no ſuch ſcriptures to be produced; the truth aſſerted may be demonſtrated from what has been before proved from ſcripture reſpecting divine illumination, and ſaving faith, viz. That true faith implies a right taſte and exerciſe of heart, which can be nothing but love: And the light and diſcerning which is eſſential to faith, implies diſintereſted benevolence, or love. And who can help ſeeing that approbation of the character of Chriſt, and receiving and truſting in him as the Saviour of ſinners, which has been ſhown is the ſcripture account of faith, does neceſſarily imply, and really is, love to him? From all this the perfect conſiſtency of the ſcripture on this head is apparent; and that it is agreeable to the reaſon and nature of things.

IV. It appears from the ſcripture that true repentance is included in ſaving faith: That repentance comes into the nature and eſſence of faith, ſo that where there is no repentance, there is not, nor can be, any ſaving faith.

This will be evident to any one, who will well obſerve the following things:

1. The ſcripture repreſents repentance as neceſſary in order to pardon. We are told that John did "preach the baptiſm of repentance for the remiſſion of ſins."* That is, he preached repentance, as neceſſary in order to their obtaining forgiveneſs. Jeſus Chriſt taught his diſciples, "that repentance and remiſſion of ſins ſhould be preached in his name among all nations."† That is, that forgiveneſs of ſins ſhould be proclaimed and offered to

* Mark i. 4. † Luke xxiv. 47.

to all that ſhould repent, and to none but ſuch; to which all ſhould be invited and called. Accordingly, we find the Apoſtles preached agreeable to this direction. "*Repent* and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, for the remiſſion of ſins."* "*Repent* ye therefore, and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted out."†

2. As repentance is neceſſary in order to forgiveneſs; ſo forgiveneſs of ſins is promiſed to repentance. The paſſages mentioned under the foregoing particular are ſo full and expreſs in this, that it is needleſs to repeat them, or to turn to others which aſſert the ſame thing. As repentance is required, in order to forgiveneſs, ſo forgiveneſs is connected with repentance.

3. Faith is repreſented in ſcripture as the only condition of pardon and ſalvation by Chriſt: As that without which no man ſhall be forgiven and ſaved; and to which theſe are promiſed. "He that believeth and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not, ſhall be damned."‡ "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life: And he that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."§ "To him give all the Prophets witneſs, that through his name, whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins."¶ A great number of paſſages to the ſame purpoſe might be cited.

From theſe premiſes it follows, that ſaving faith and repentance are not two diſtinct exerciſes, but imply and include each other, ſo that repentance comes into the nature and eſſence of faith. There is no other poſſible ſuppoſition by which the ſcripture account of this matter can be reconciled. If he who believes is forgiven, and ſhall be ſaved, and he who believeth not, is condemned; and yet no one is forgiven, or ſhall be ſaved, unleſs he repent; and

* Act ii. 38. † Act iii. 19. ‡ Mark xvi. 16. § John viii. 36.
¶ Acts x. 43.

and pardon and ſalvation are promiſed to repentance; then he who believes, does alſo repent, and he who does not repent, does not believe: Which could not be true, unleſs repentance and faith imply each other, ſo that there is faith in evangelical repentance, and repentance comes into the nature of ſaving faith, and is eſſential to it. Faith and repentance are not two diſtinct parallel conditions of pardon and ſalvation. They cannot be ſo, conſiſtent with the repreſentation of ſcripture reſpecting this matter, which has been produced. But they are ſo implied in each other, and ſo far connected, that one is not without the other.

It is abundantly evident that the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles viewed and treated the matter in this light. This appears not only from what has been already obſerved; but it will be farther evident by attending to the account which the Evangeliſts, Mark and Luke, give of the goſpel, which Jeſus Chriſt directed his Apoſtles to preach to all nations. In Mark, we have it in the following words—"And he ſaid unto them, go ye into all the world, and preach the goſpel to every creatures. He that believeth and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not, ſhall be damned."* The good news to be proclaimed is ſummed up in theſe words, holding forth the condition on which eternal life is to be offered, and obtained, which is here called *believing*. Luke ſays that Chriſt directed, "that *repentance* and remiſſion of ſins ſhould be preached in his name among all nations."† Theſe words contain the ſum of what Chriſt ordered to be preached, and expreſs the condition on which pardon and ſalvation were to be offered to all nations; and therefore is parallel with the paſſage juſt cited from Mark, and does expreſs the very ſame thing, though in different words. But what Mark calls *believing*, Luke calls *repentance*. Therefore, ſaving faith and repentance, are not eſſentially different;

* Mark xvi. 16. † Luke xxiv. 47.

but repentance implies what is eſſential to faith, and faith takes into the nature of it what is eſſential to true repentance, ſo that one may be put for the other conſiſtent with propriety and truth.

The account we have of the Apoſtles preaching this ſame goſpel, in the execution of their Lord's inſtructions, ſerves to prove that the above cited words of the Evangeliſts are intended to expreſs one and the ſame thing, and point out the only condition on which they were to offer pardon and ſalvation, and that the Apoſtles underſtood it thus. When the hearers of Peter's firſt ſermon were brought ſolicitouſly to aſk, "What ſhall we do!" He ſaid unto them, "*Repent*, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, for the remiſſion of ſins."* Here he expreſsly preached "repentance and remiſſion of ſins," exactly agreeable to the direction of Chriſt, as it is expreſſed by Luke. But when this ſame Apoſtle is called to preach the goſpel to Cornelius, and tell him, "what he ought to do," we find him expreſſing himſelf in the followng words. "To him give all the Prophets witneſs, that through his name, whoſoever *believeth* in him, ſhall receive the remiſſion of ſins." Here, inſtead of *repent*, St. Peter uſes the word *believe*, which is the only difference between this, and the above cited direction to his hearers. And in this he comes nearer the words in which Mark expreſſes the direction of our Lord, which was to be regarded as their rule in this caſe. "He that BELIEVETH—ſhall be ſaved." This Apoſtle cannot be reconciled to himſelf in any other way but that in which the Evangeliſts may be reconciled to each other, viz. that by *repentance* he means the ſame thing which at another time he expreſſes by *faith* or *believing*. And we cannot account for his expreſſing himſelf thus, but by ſuppoſing that faith implies repentance, ſo that he who believes, does in the very act of believing, repent.

But

* Acts ii. 38.

But aſide from the expreſs teſtimony of ſcripture, it is demonſtratively certain, that repentance comes into the nature of ſaving faith, from what has been proved concerning it, under the preceding particulars, viz. that ſaving faith implies a right diſpoſition of heart; and that this right taſte and diſpoſition conſiſts in love to God. For there can be no degree of right diſpoſition, and love to God, or friendly diſpoſition towards him, in an impenitent heart. Every degree of right exerciſe, and of love to God, by a ſinner, implies repentance, as eſſential to ſuch exerciſes. Therefore the impenitent man is always an unbeliever; and every believer is a true penitent.—Where there is no repentance, there is no faith.

That repentance is implied in ſaving faith, and the reaſon of it, will be ſtill more evident, by conſidering the nature of true repentance, and in what it conſiſts, according to ſcripture. The definition given of repentance by the Aſſembly of Divines, in the ſhorter catechiſm, appears to be agreeable to the ſcripture, which is in the following words, "Repentance unto life is a ſaving grace, whereby a ſinner, out of a true ſenſe of his ſin, and apprehenſion of the mercy of God in Chriſt, doth with grief and hatred of his ſin, turn from it, unto God—with full purpoſe of, and endeavour after new obedience." Here repentance is defined as including the whole of a ſaving converſion: And he who attends to his Bible, muſt be ſenſible that repentance is commonly uſed there in this ſenſe, and always, unleſs it be evidently uſed in a limited ſenſe. Repentance has a firſt and more immediate reſpect to ſin, diſcerning, realizing, and confeſſing the malignant nature, odiouſneſs and ill deſert of it, as committed againſt God, and a violation of his law. It therefore ſuppoſes and implies the true knowledge of God, diſcerning and realizing his being, greatneſs, excellence, worthineſs and authority: And conſequently a convic-

tion and ſenſe of heart, of the righteouſneſs, excellence and perfection of the law of God, both in the precepts and ſanctions of it; or an underſtanding, cordial approbation of it; for it is in the light of thoſe objects that ſin, which is the tranſgreſſion of this law, which derives its foundation and reaſon from the Divine character and perfection, appears in its true colours and extent, and as infinitely odious, and deſerving infinite evil, even endleſs puniſhment. Repentance includes right views and exerciſes of heart reſpecting theſe objects, GOD, LAW, SIN, which right exerciſes of heart are ſuppoſed and implied in right views and ſentiments concerning them. Therefore, repentance implies and conſiſts in a hearty regard to God, as infinitely excellent and glorious; or, which is the ſame, in love to the Deity; and in a cordial approbation of the law of God, in which the divine character appears, and is effectually aſſerted; and in a true love to this law, rightly underſtood; and in hatred of ſin, as committed againſt this law, and this God, and an hearty acknowledgment of his own guilt and vileneſs, and deſert of the puniſhment, which the law of God threatens to ſin. All this will be acknowledged to be implied in true repentance, and eſſential to it, by all who have properly attended to this ſubject.

But theſe ſentiments and exerciſes are ſuppoſed and implied in ſaving faith, or faith in Jeſus Chriſt. If we ſuppoſe this faith to conſiſt in right ſpeculative views of the goſpel, in a conviction of the truth and excellence of it, excluſive of any exerciſe of heart, if this could be, yet even this ſuppoſes and includes right ſentiments of God, law, and ſin; for without a right view of theſe, the goſpel, or way of ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, cannot be underſtood. For the goſpel implies theſe truths reſpecting God, law, and ſin, and is founded upon them; and the exiſtence, wiſdom and glory of it are derived from the nature and

perfection

perfection of God and his law, and the conſequent nature and ill deſert of ſin. If theſe be left out of view, there cannot be any true idea or conception of the goſpel, in the mind. The ideas and ſentiments therefore, which are eſſential to repentance, are equally eſſential to faith in Chriſt.

But if ſaving faith includes a right diſpoſition and exerciſes of heart, in receiving Jeſus Chriſt, as he is offered in the goſpel, as eſſential to the natute of it, which has been proved: Then it neceſſarily ſuppoſes and implies thoſe exerciſes in which true repentance conſiſts. Embracing Jeſus Chriſt as a Saviour, or looking to him and truſting in him for ſalvation from ſin and miſery, implies a true view and cordial approbation of the character of God, and of his law, an acknowledgment of the deſert of ſin, and of his deſert of endleſs deſtruction; and a hatred of ſin, and hearty renouncing it, and deſire of deliverance from it. It is eaſy to ſee that a perſon cannot heartily approve of Chriſt as a Saviour from ſin and miſery, to which he is juſtly expoſed by ſin, and look to him, and accept of him, in this character, unleſs he ſees and acknowledges himſelf to be a ſinner, deſerving eternal deſtruction; and in his heart hates ſin and forſakes it, as no impenitent perſon does, or can do: For the heart, in turning or cleaving to Chriſt, turns from, and renounces ſin, in this very act. And applying to Chriſt for deliverance from the curſe of the law, carries in it an acknowledgment of the deſert of ſin, and the righteouſneſs of the divine law. It is therefore certain that repentance is implied in ſaving faith, and comes into the nature of it, and has a coexiſtence with it; and is not properly a fruit or effect of faith in Chriſt. Therefore, as ſaving faith and true repentance are thus implied in each other, ſo that the exerciſe of faith is alſo an exerciſe of repentance, we may hence clearly ſee the reaſon and propriety of the

Apoſtles ſpeaking ſometimes of repentance as the condition of ſalvation, and at other times repreſenting faith in Chriſt as the only condition; and that they are perfectly conſiſtent in this.

Sometimes, indeed, repentance and faith ſeem to be uſed in a more limited ſenſe; and, in this view, diſtinguiſhed from each other. Thus we find St. Paul ſpeaking, "Teſtifying both to the Jews, and alſo to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt."* Here the Apoſtle limits the meaning of the words repentance and faith, and ſo makes a diſtinction between them. And by *repentance toward God*, he appears to mean right views and exerciſes with reſpect to God, as lawgiver and judge, aſſerting and maintaining the rights of the Deity; and ſo right notions and exerciſes reſpecting the law of God, and ſin, the tranſgreſſion of this law; ſuch ſentiments and exerciſes as ought to take place in the mind of a ſinner, and muſt take place, whenever he comes to a right taſte and temper of heart, whether he have any diſtinct views of Chriſt, and the way of ſalvation by him, or not; and which are neceſſary in order to underſtand and embrace the goſpel, as has been ſhown. By *faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, he intends thoſe views and exerciſes of heart toward Jeſus Chriſt, as a ſuitable and all ſufficient Saviour from ſin, and the curſe of the law, which are agreeable to the goſpel, and to which ſinners are invited. According to this diſtinction, as repentance toward God is put firſt, ſo it takes place in the mind firſt, in the order of nature, and precedes faith in Jeſus Chriſt. Repentance toward God, in this ſenſe of it, reſpects the term *from which* the ſinner turns in converſion, and conſiſts in a cordial approbation of the law of God, and ſelf condemnation for his ſin, and hating and renouncing it in his heart. Faith in Jeſus Chriſt

reſpects

* Acts xx. 21.

reſpects the term *to which* the ſinner turns, viz. God in Jeſus Chriſt, or God manifeſt in the fleſh; and conſiſts in believing the goſpel with all his heart, which implies receiving and truſting in Chriſt, as a ſufficient and ſuitable Saviour for ſuch a ſinner.

The ſame diſtinction ſeems to be made between repentance, and faith in Chriſt, in the following paſſages.—"Repent ye, and believe the goſpel."* "And ye, when ye had ſeen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him."† "But ſhewed unto them—that they ſhould repent, and turn unto God."‡ But all this is conſiſtent with repentance being implied in faith, ſo that where there is no repentance, there is no faith in Chriſt; and repentance, taken in the full ſenſe of it, implying ſaving faith: And the whole may be conſidered as one and the ſame complex act of the mind, viewed and diſtinguiſhed according to the different and oppoſite objects to which it has reſpect, viz. ſin and the curſe; and God in Jeſus Chriſt, which is a turning from ſin to God, revealed in the goſpel. And therefore, when faith or repentance is mentioned without any limitation, each comprehends the whole, even active converſion, or turning from ſin to God, by Jeſus Chriſt.§

To prevent miſtakes, and farther to elucidate this point, it muſt be obſerved, that repentance toward God, which, in the order of nature, at leaſt, is antecedent to faith in Jeſus Chriſt, implies faith in God, or a real belief of his being and glorious perfection. For as has been obſerved, God muſt be ſeen in ſome meaſure in his true character, in order to ſee the reaſon and foundation of his law, and conſequently the evil nature of ſin, which can be known only by underſtanding the divine law.

* Mark i. 15. † Matth. xxi. 32. ‡ Acts xxvi. 20.

§ See Mr. Edwards's Diſcourſe on Juſtification by Faith alone, page 103, 114, publiſhed in the year 1738. And Mr. Bellamy's Eſſay on the Nature and Glory of the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt. Section viii.

law. This diſcerning and belief of the exiſtence and perfection of God; of the reaſon, reality, exiſtence and extent of the divine law, and of the ſinfulneſs and ill deſert of man, is faith: It is the faith of a mind divinely illuminated, and implies right taſte and exerciſe of heart: Or it is a belief peculiar to a renewed heart. And even this faith implies repentance; for an impenitent heart is not capable of it, and does not diſcern and believe the exiſtence and character of God, as the renewed penitent heart does. This faith now deſcribed is, in the order of nature, antecedent to faith in Jeſus Chriſt; as thoſe objects muſt be ſeen as they are, and believed with a faith which implies exerciſes of heart in ſome meaſure anſwerable to them, before the goſpel can be underſtood, or there can be any diſcerning or faith reſpecting Jeſus Chriſt and the way of ſalvation by him. That the diſcerning and belief of theſe objects, God, law, ſin, is true faith, and of the ſame nature with that by which men believe in Jeſus Chriſt, is evident from ſcripture. "Faith is the evidence of things not ſeen. Through faith we underſtand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, ſo that things which are ſeen, were not made of things which do appear. He that cometh to God, muſt believe that he is."* Here the Apoſtle is ſpeaking of the faith which is peculiar to good men, true ſaints: It is a belief that God is. It is true indeed that this faith is not complete, without believing that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him, which is the ſame with believing the goſpel, or believing in Jeſus Chriſt; but the belief of the former is firſt in the order of nature, and is neceſſarily implied in the latter. And the latter implies a true view and belief of the exiſtence of the divine law, and the character of the ſinner, as has been ſhewn. Our Saviour makes this ſame diſtinction between believing in God and believing in him, and ſpeaks

* Heb. xi. 1, 3, 6.

ſpeaks of the former as prior to the latter, and the foundation of it, in his exhortation to his diſciples, "Believe in God, believe alſo in me."†

It muſt be alſo obſerved, that what is properly called *evangelical repentance*, is not prior to faith in Chriſt. The repentance which precedes faith in Jeſus Chriſt, reſpects the objects and truths, which are diſcerned prior to any true regard to Jeſus Chriſt, or the knowledge of his character as the Saviour of ſinners, the former being neceſſary in order to the latter, as has been ſhewn. Repentance, conſidered as it reſpects ſins againſt Jeſus Chriſt, and the goſpel, and the great ſin of unbelief, does not precede a belief of the truths of the goſpel, or faith in Jeſus Chriſt; for this is impoſſible. But repentance towards God, as it has been deſcribed above, is of the ſame nature with evangelical repentance; and implies a diſpoſition to repent of the ſin of not believing on Chriſt, when his character comes into view, and does always accompany, and is implied in, faith in Jeſus Chriſt.

But though theſe diſtinctions may be made in theory, and are founded in the nature of things, and the connexion of revealed truth, and dependence of one revealed object upon another; and ſuch diſtinctions may be proper and neceſſary in order more clearly to underſtand the ſubject to which we are attending: Yet a perſon may doubtleſs be a true believer in Jeſus Chriſt, and not diſtinguiſh his views and exerciſes, ſo as to perceive experimentally which is prior to the other, and in what particular order they have taken place in his mind; and may entertain notions in theory on this point, which are really contrary to the truth of things, which may have been imbibed by education and wrong inſtruction, or ſome

† John xiv. 1.——The words in the original, in both parts of the ſcripture, tranſlated *believe*, are exactly the ſame, without any variation, and ſhould have been ſo tranſlated, not *ye do believe in God*, but *believe in God*.

ſome other way. But whatever contrary opinions have been advanced in theory, on this head, it is preſumed, that it has been now proved from ſcripture, and the reaſon and nature of things, that repentance is implied in ſaving faith, and comes into the nature and eſſence of it; ſo that where there is no repentance, there is no ſaving faith; and that it is impoſſible that any perſon ſhould believe on Jeſus Chriſt in a ſaving manner, with an impenitent heart, which was the truth advanced, and to be ſupported under this head.

V. It is evident from the holy ſcriptures that the whole of evangelical obedience is included in ſaving faith. Or that ſaving faith implies all the holy exerciſes and works of a chriſtian, and is the ſum of all; ſo that where there is no faith, there is no true obedience, and where there is faith, there is obedience, and in this obedience, ſaving faith does eſſentially conſiſt. Saving faith does not *produce* obedience, or the latter flow from the former, as the effect from the cauſe; but faith itſelf is evangelical obedience, and cannot be diſtinguiſhed from it.*

When the Jews aſked Jeſus, "What ſhall we do, that we might work the works of God?" He anſwered, "This is the work of God, *that ye believe on him whom he hath ſent.*"† The plain meaning of the queſtion put by the Jews is this; What are theſe exerciſes, duties and works which God requires under the diſpenſation, and in the kingdom which the Meſſiah is to ſet up, in order to obtain that everlaſting life which he will give? And Jeſus comprized it all in *believing on the Meſſiah.* It is obſervable,

* When Peter ſays, the hearts of the uncircumciſed Gentiles were *purified by faith*, Acts xv. 9. the meaning is not, that faith was the cauſe, and purity of heart, the effect; but that faith, was the purity of heart itſelf. This is illuſtrated by one expreſſion of this ſame Apoſtle. "Seeing ye have purified your ſouls in (or by) obeying the truth, through the ſpirit." Peter i. 22. None will ſuppoſe that purity of heart, and obeying the truth, can be diſtinguiſhed here, as if the former were the effect of the latter.

† John vi. 28, 29.

obſervable, that our Lord does not ſay, that in order to work the works of God, they muſt believe, ſo that their faith ſhould become the foundation and principle of good works: But he ſays, This is the work itſelf. It will doubtleſs appear, that the natural and plain import of the words is, that faith in the Meſſiah, or believing in Jeſus Chriſt, comprehends the whole of what the goſpel requires, or is that in which conformity to the goſpel in heart and life conſiſts; and is therefore the ſum of goſpel holineſs, or evangelical obedience.

Agreeable to this are the words of St. Paul, "The life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God."* The Apoſtle is here ſpeaking of his life as a chriſtian, a life of chriſtian holineſs or evangelical obedience, and ſays, he lived this life by the faith of the Son of God; that is, by faith in Jeſus Chriſt. For the faith of Chriſt, is the faith by which men believe in Chriſt, for righteouſneſs, and juſtification. Hence it appears, that the ſpiritual life of a chriſtian is his faith, or it is a life of faith. Therefore, that conformity to the goſpel in which chriſtian obedience conſiſts, is called, *The obedience of Faith.* "According to the revelation of the myſtery which was kept ſecret ſince the world began, but now is made manifeſt, and by the ſcriptures of the Prophets, according to the commandment of the everlaſting God, made known to all nations for the OBEDIENCE OF FAITH."† St. Paul uſes the ſame expreſſion in the beginning of this epiſtle, though it is a little varied in our tranſlation. "By whom we have received grace and apoſtleſhip, for *obedience to the faith* among all nations."‡ He is evidently ſpeaking here of the ſame thing as in the above cited words; and the words which are there tranſlated, *for obedience of faith*, are exactly the ſame here as in the original, and ſhould have been ſo tranſlated, as ſuch a tranſlation is moſt exact and literal.

And

* Gal. ii. 20. † Rom. xvi. 25, 26. ‡ Chap. i. 5.

And that *the obedience of faith* intends conformity in heart and life to the goſpel revelation, or evangelical holineſs or obedience, not only appears from the words themſelves, in the connexion in which they ſtand; but alſo from a parallel expreſſion in this ſame epiſtle. "I have therefore, whereof I may glory through Jeſus Chriſt, in theſe things which pertain to God—*to make the Gentiles obedient in word and deed.*"* The Apoſtle is evidently ſpeaking here of the ſame thing, as in the above cited paſſages: He is ſpeaking of the ſame perſons, the Gentiles; of the ſame cauſes, means, and operation, the goſpel preached and attended with the power of God; and therefore he is doubtleſs ſpeaking of the ſame effect. This he here expreſſes by their being *made obedient in word and deed.* Hence it follows, that the obedience of faith, is the ſame with obedience to the goſpel, or evangelical holineſs. Agreeable to this, faith is called, *obeying the goſpel*, in this epiſtle. "But they have not all *obeyed the goſpel*; for Iſaiah ſaith, Who hath *believed* our report?"† Faith then is goſpel obedience; that is, evangelical obedience. Therefore, obeying Chriſt is mentioned as the ſame thing with believing in him. "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal ſalvation, unto all them that *obey him.*"‡ The chriſtian life of holy obedience is expreſſed by "Fighting the fight of faith."§

What the Apoſtle James ſays of faith, ſerves farther to eſtabliſh the point under conſideration. He, ſpeaking of ſaving faith, ſays, "Faith without works is dead." And again, "As the body without the ſpirit is dead, ſo faith without works is dead alſo."¶ According to this, works, or holy exerciſes and obedience, are eſſential to true faith. They are the life of faith, by which faith lives and acts; and therefore, are faith living

* Rom. xv. 17, 18. † Chap. x. 16. ‡ Heb. v. 9. § 1 Tim. vi. 12. ¶ James ii. 20, 26.

ing and acting. As the body without the ſpirit, is not a true living man, but the ſpirit or life is an eſſential part of a man; ſo nothing can be called true faith, which is, or can exiſt without works; and works, or evangelical obedience, are included in faith and eſſential to it, and as really, and as much faith itſelf, as the ſpirit or life of a man is eſſential to the man, and is indeed the man himſelf.

The Apoſtle does not ſay, that faith *produces* works, which may be diſtinguiſhed from ſaving faith, and are the effect and conſequence of it: Nor is there any thing in the Bible to warrant ſuch a repreſentation of the matter: Nor does he mean any thing like this; for then the ſimilitude by which he illuſtrates the ſubject would be ill choſen, and nothing to the purpoſe: For the body does not *produce* the ſpirit and life of a man, but this co-exiſts with the body, without which it would not be a man; and does itſelf produce every thing done by the man externally.

But it muſt be carefully noted, that the Apoſtle does not mean external actions merely; but thoſe exerciſes of heart, that diſpoſition of will, of which external actions are the proper and genuine expreſſion; and in which all true evangelical obedience eſſentially and ſummarily conſiſts. He does not mean mere external motions and actions, for there is no life in them, any farther than they are the fruit and expreſſion of internal life and motion; which internal life and motion is the life of faith, or faith living and acting; and not any effect produced by faith, any more than the life and motion of the ſpirit of a man is the ſpirit and effect of a dead body.

It will farther appear that St. James includes the works of which he ſpeaks, by which he means evangelical obedience, in ſaving faith, as eſſential to it, by attending to what he ſays of the faith of Abraham, the father and

pattern

pattern of all believers. "Seeſt thou, how faith wrought with his works; and by works was faith made perfect."* If faith operates in, or together with works; then works are the operation of faith, or faith exerting and exerciſing itſelf. And if faith be not perfect without works, then works are a part of faith, and belong to it, being included in the nature of it. If faith does not include evangelical obedience, which the Apoſtle means by works, then faith may be perfect without it, and cannot be perfected by it. But James ſays, faith is not perfect without this; therefore it is implied and included in faith. Evangelical obedience is ſaving faith, in ſuch a ſenſe and manner, that the one cannot be diſtinguiſhed from the other; it is the obedience of faith; and where there is no ſuch obedience, there is no faith.

If we compare three reaſonable ſentences of the Apoſtle Paul, it will appear, that according to him, ſaving faith and goſpel holineſs, or evangelical obedience, are not two diſtinct things; but really one and the ſame. They are the following: "For in Jeſus Chriſt, neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, BUT FAITH WHICH WORKETH BY LOVE."† "For in Jeſus Chriſt, neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, BUT A NEW CREATURE."‡ "Circumciſion is nothing, and uncircumciſion is nothing, BUT THE KEEPING OF THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD."§ The two firſt of theſe ſentences are the ſame in words, except the laſt clauſe in them. For *faith which worketh by love*, in the firſt, he puts, *a new creature*, in the ſecond. There appears no way to make the Apoſtle conſiſtent, but taking faith that worketh by love, and the new creature, to mean one and the ſame thing. But by the new creature is meant that holineſs which takes place in men under the goſpel, by their being "created in Chriſt Jeſus *unto good works*."¶ Faith then, which

* v. 22. † Gal. v. 6. ‡ Chap. vi. 15. § 1 Cor. 7. 19. ¶ Eph. ii. 10.

which worketh by love, is the new creature exercising itself in acts of evangelical holiness. And it can be nothing else, according to the natural and necessary meaning of the phrase, "Faith which worketh by love," as it has been explained. For if the life and operative nature of faith be love; then gospel holiness is the essence of faith, and this is the new creature. And it hence appears, that the last sentence is perfectly agreeable to the former, and asserts the same thing; for faith which worketh by love, and the new creature, are gospel holiness, or evangelical obedience, and this consists in keeping the commandments of God our Saviour, and can mean nothing, more or less.

Thus it appears evident from the representation of this subject in the scripture, that saving faith, and evangelical obedience, are not two distinct things, or different kinds of exercises; but are so far one and the same, that believing on Jesus Christ intends and implies the whole. Not only is faith an act of evangelical obedience; but every act of gospel holiness is an exercise of saving faith, which implies the whole. And the reason and consistence of this will appear, if the whole that has been observed from scripture concerning faith, be kept in view, and properly considered.

It has been shewn, that saving faith does not consist in mere speculation, but right and holy disposition and exercise of heart is implied in it, and essential to it; and that this exercise of heart is *love*, which is the life and operative nature of saving faith. It is love, discerning, tasting and approving of the divine perfections and truths revealed in the gospel; and particularly, discerning and delighting in the character of Jesus Christ, and heartily receiving, adhering to him, and trusting in him, in the character and offices which he sustains, as the Saviour of sinners. And in these exercises all gospel holiness, or

evangelical obedience, conſiſts. It all conſiſts in *love*; for there is no obedience which does not conſiſt in love, love to God manifeſt in the fleſh, and the love to our neighbour, which is implied in this. This love is exerciſed in viewing Jeſus Chriſt in the light in which the goſpel ſets him, in receiving and truſting in him, and paying proper acknowledgments to him; or, which is the ſame, in conforming to him, his character, example, doctrines and precepts, in heart and life. In one word, it is all comprehended and conſiſts in RECEIVING Jeſus Chriſt—and all external obedience or holineſs, expreſſed in words and actions, is but a proper outward expreſſion of an inward, hearty *receiving* Jeſus Chriſt, in a cordial compliance with the goſpel.

This may be illuſtrated farther, by attending to a few particulars. Hearkening to Chriſt, or yielding and ſubmiting to his teaching and inſtructions, is the ſame with receiving him as a prophet and teacher. Every act of true ſubmiſſion to Chriſt, and obeying him, is receiving him in his kingly office. All ſelf denial for his ſake, and every inſtance of voluntary ſuffering in his cauſe, is an exerciſe and expreſſion of faith in him, and relying on his promiſes, or *truſting* in him. Following Chriſt as his diſciple, and cleaving to him, in hope of ſalvation by him, is the ſame with actually receiving him and truſting in him, as a Saviour. The exerciſe of true humility, in ſelf condemnation, and renouncing all ſelf dependence, is implied in receiving Chriſt as our righteouſneſs and ſtrength. Actually forſaking ſin in heart and life, is an actual acceptance of deliverance and freedom from ſin; and therefore an actual acceptance of Chriſt as a Saviour from ſin. And the practice of chriſtian holineſs, in every branch of it, is an actual acceptance of Chriſt, as our ſanctification. Heartily engaging in the cauſe of Chriſt, forſaking all things for his ſake, ſeeking the intereſt of his

kingdom,

kingdom, as the first and most important object, is an exercise and expression of love and union of heart to him; and a cordial *receiving* him as the Son of God, and Saviour of men.

Therefore, if *receiving* Christ, is the same with believing on him, or comes into the essence of saving faith; then all gospel holiness, as it has respect to Christ, and is a practical receiving him in his true character, is really the exercise of saving faith, and is all included in it.—This is that by which faith operates, in the proper exertions of it, and is made perfect. And we are hence led to see the meaning and propriety of the following words, as a concise description of evangelical faith and holiness. "As ye have therefore *received* Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk ye IN HIM. And whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, *do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.*"*

But a question may be suggested in the minds of some, from the foregoing account of saving faith, which it will be proper to answer, as this may serve to render the subject more clear and intelligible. It is as follows:

QUESTION. If hope, love and repentance are saving faith; and if every christian grace, and all the branches of gospel holiness, are implied in faith, and really are faith, why are these distinguished, and called by these different names, in the scriptures? We find faith, hope, and love, mentioned and distinguished as different graces. And we often find a particular enumeration of the several christian graces, such as, faith, love, hope, joy, humility, repentance,

* Col. ii. 6, iii. 17.—"The obedience of a christian, so far as it is truly evangelical, and performed with the spirit of the Son sent forth into the heart, has all relation to Christ the Mediator; *and is but an expression of the soul's believing unition to Christ.* All evangelical works, are works of that faith that worketh by love; and every such act of obedience, wherein it is inward, and the act of the soul, is only a new, effective act of reception of Christ, and adherence to the glorious Saviour."—President Edwards's Discourse on Justification by Faith alone, page 83.

repentance, righteouſneſs, goodneſs, godlineſs, meekneſs, patience, temperance, &c. If all theſe are faith, or included in it, why are they diſtinguiſhed from it, as they ſeem to be?

ANSWER, 1. It muſt be evident to every one who will attend, that the various chriſtian exerciſes, which are denoted by different names in ſcripture, and commonly called *chriſtian graces*, are not in themſelves ſo diſtinct and different as not to imply each other. To ſuppoſe them to be diſtinct, ſeparate and independent one of another, is manifeſtly contrary to truth, and tends to confuſe and miſlead the mind in attending to ſubjects of this nature.

True grace, or chriſtian holineſs, is, in the nature of it, one and the ſame thing, though as it is exerted, and appears in various exerciſes, on different occaſions, in different circumſtances, and towards different objects, there is a diverſity, or it puts on different forms, from which it is called by different names; while yet, in ſubſtance and eſſence, it is the ſame thing.

It is abundantly evident from ſcripture, that love is the whole of all chriſtian grace. This is all that is required of men. In this the law is fulfilled and obeyed. Therefore, all chriſtian holineſs conſiſts in this. It follows, that all chriſtian graces are love in the various branches of it, exerciſed and expreſſed on various occaſions, in different circumſtances, and towards different objects.

The Apoſtle Paul ſays, "All the law (meaning the ſecond table of it) is fulfilled in one word, even in this, "Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf."* Yet he denominates the various exerciſes, in which men do by this love and ſerve one another, by different names, ſuch as goodneſs, mercy, gentleneſs, patience, meekneſs, long-ſuffering, &c. In the ſame manner love to God, which

is

* Gal. v. 14.

is the whole that is required in the first table of the law, is called love, faith, trust in God, fear, hope, joy, repentance, humility, &c. according to the different views and circumstances in which this same love is exercised: All which, therefore, are the exercises of one and the same affection, and do involve and imply each other, and are in substance and essence the same.

The new creature, produced by the spirit of God in regeneration, by which men are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, is that in which all christian holiness consists. This is the moral image of God; the divine nature communicated and implanted; or Christ formed in the soul. And this consists in a principle of true love. And all the exercises and obedience of a christian, through the course of a holy life, are the exertions and exercises of this love, this new creature. It is the same life and active nature, by which the christian lives, and acts in a holy manner, on all occasions; the new creature living and acting: As much so, as the various exercises of an animal are the same life, exerting itself and acting.

Unless we have this view of the grace or holiness of a christian, as it is exercised on all proper occasions, and towards different objects, and in manifold various circumstances, called love, faith, hope, repentance, &c. our thoughts on this subject will be attended with a degree of darkness and confusion.

Answer, 2. Notwithstanding christian holiness is one and the same thing in the nature and essence of it, and every branch of evangelical obedience is the exercise of the same principle and life; yet this same love or holiness, as it is exercised in different modes and forms, on various occasions, in peculiar circumstances, and with respect to different and opposite objects, may properly be distinguished by different names: Yea, this is convenient and necessary, in order to the most axact and clear

communication of the ideas which are eſſential to the right underſtanding of this ſubject. In the courſe of a chriſtian life, the ſame holy principle, the ſame in kind, nature and ſubſtance, exerts itſelf on various occaſions, and puts on different modes, and appears in different forms, as it reſpects the different circumſtances of the ſubject exerciſing himſelf, and the different and oppoſite objects, which are particularly regarded by the mind: And it is proper and neceſſary, in order to repreſent and expreſs, in the beſt manner, this exerciſe in the different modes and forms of it, to call it by different names. And none can talk or write intelligibly on the ſubject any other way, without a perpetual, tedious circumlocution.

Right views and exerciſes of heart, reſpecting God, conſidered as being what he is in himſelf, is LOVE, conſidered in the general nature of it, as conſiſting primarily in diſintereſted benevolence, and comprehending all holy love. This is generally meant perhaps by love, when ſpoken of in ſcripture, in diſtinction from other graces, ſuch as faith and hope, &c. and is the root and eſſence of all right exerciſes of heart.

The love of a ſinner towards God, whom he has offended, ſo far as it regards thoſe objects which relate to his eſſence, exerciſes itſelf in juſtifying God in all his declarations and proceedings againſt the ſinner; in confeſſing his ſin with ſelf condemnation and abhorrence; in hating ſin, and turning from it. And this is true repentance.

This ſame love, as it conſiſts in believing in, realizing and reliſhing the true character of the inviſible God and Saviour, as exhibited in divine revelation, is exerciſed in receiving and truſting in him as a wonderful, allſufficient, excellent and glorious Saviour of ſinners. And this is ſaving faith, as diſtinguiſhed from repentance, hope and love.

Love,

Love, conſidered as realizing and deſiring the future good things, brought to light in the goſpel, as the portion of the redeemed, and relying upon the divine declarations and promiſes, is hope, as diſtinguiſhed from faith and love.

But it muſt be obſerved and remembered, that as faith, hope, repentance, &c. partake of the nature of love, and are really love diverſified, with reſpect to the objects and operations of it; ſo they are included in each other, and where one is, there the others are, as comprehended in that. Yea, repentance, faith, hope and every chriſtian grace, may all be comprized in the ſame exerciſe of heart. Thus, faith and repentance cannot be ſeparated, but imply each other, and come into the very ſame act of the mind, as a true ſight and ſenſe of the divine character, and of the nature of ſin, are implied in both, and eſſential to each: And a turning from ſin to Chriſt, is both repentance and ſaving faith.

Hence it is that, though there is this variety and diſtinction in the exerciſes of the new creature, which is the proper ground of their being called by diſtinct names; yet as what is called by theſe different names, is really involved in the ſame act of the mind, and one is implied in the other, they are often uſed to denote the whole, or the whole is often intended to be comprehended by one of theſe names. Thus love is often mentioned in the ſcriptures as intending the whole of chriſtian holineſs. And repentance is frequently put for the whole of active converſion: And the ſame is often denoted by faith, as has been obſerved and ſhown. And hope is uſed to expreſs the whole of ſaving faith.

The whole of the foregoing, concerning the nature of ſaving faith, will lead to the following definition of it.

Saving faith is an underſtanding, cordial receiving the divine teſtimony concerning Jeſus Chriſt, and the way of ſalvation by him; in which the heart accords and conforms to the goſpel.

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The following obſervations may ſerve to illuſtrate this definition; and farther explain and confirm what has been offered on this important ſubject:

I. THE things which the goſpel contains, as peculiar to it, which relate to Jeſus Chriſt, and redemption by him, and which are the objects about which chriſtian holineſs is chiefly exerciſed, are matters of *pure revelation*. The exhibition of them to us is by revelation only. And it is a revelation of ſpiritual, ſupernatural, myſterious and wonderful things, which without ſuch revelation are wholly out of ſight, altogether above our ſenſes and reaſon, and out of the reach of any created faculties, as they depend entirely on the mere good pleaſure of God. In this revelation alone, are exhibited the perſon and character of Jeſus Chriſt, an inviſible, wonderful and myſterious perſon. And here we have our ſtate revealed as it reſpects him, and his character and works, our need of him, and concern with him, as offering himſelf to us as an allſufficient Saviour. And the benefits offered by Chriſt, are deliverance from inviſible eternal evil, and the beſtowment of good things, which are inviſible, wonderful, incomprehenſible and future, belonging to the unſeen world.

II. THE goſpel is not of the nature of a law exhibiting the ſovereign authority and will of God, demanding of man what is his duty, which he is to perform and offer to him, being what he expects to receive of man, as the price of his favour: But it is of the nature of a *teſtimony*; a revelation not of works to be done by us, in order to a reward, and the price of it; but of what God has done for us; and an offer made to us, to be received by us. It is a revelation teſtifying to us God's myſteries, wonderful mercy, wiſdom and power, exerciſed in our behalf, making ample proviſion for the redemption of man, and

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offered to us, in order to a reception by us, answerable to such a revelation. It is a record and testimony which God has given of invisible, spiritual, supernatural good things, which are provided and suited to our circumstances and necessities, and freely offered to all who are willing to receive, as a free bounty, without money and without price. This leads to observe again,

III. THIS revelation represents man as altogether, universally and remarkably dependent on God for salvation and happiness: Nothing could set this in a more visible, sensible, striking light, than the gospel does. This represents man as infinitely guilty and miserable, as wholly undone, helpless and lost, and altogether dependent on the Redeemer for that help and grace, of which he is, and ever will be, infinitely unworthy.

Now, in the view of these observations, it appears, that the leading and principal exercise and manifestation of a right taste, or of the new creature, which consists in the concord or agreement of the heart with the divine truths exhibited in the gospel, is, in *believing* them, and acquiescing in them as true, and as really being just as they are reported by the word and testimony of God. And this, as has been shewn, is not an act of intellect merely; but of the whole soul, in the exercise of a right taste and temper of mind, which is holiness, or the new creature.

And as this divine revelation, in which the things of the gospel are exhibited, is a testimony of good things provided by God, and freely offered to man, in order to his reception, that exercise of the heart, which is answerable to this testimony, and by which the heart accords with this revelation, and embraces it as true and good, consists in a proper and cordial reception of the good things therein offered, which is the same with receiving Christ, in which, as has been shewn, christian virtue or holiness consists. And this also has been shewn to be saving faith.

And

And as the goſpel repreſents man as ſtanding in infinite need of the good things therein brought to view, and offered, he being in himſelf altogether undone and helpleſs, in an infinitely wretched and dangerous ſtate, that exerciſe or ſoul which is anſwerable to this view of the caſe, by which it conſents to this revelation and teſtimony, is a renouncing all ſelf dependence, and looking to and truſting in Chriſt alone for righteouſneſs and ſtrength, and complete redemption. And this alſo is ſaving faith.

Saving faith is the proper, active union of the ſoul to Jeſus Chriſt, as he is revealed in the goſpel. But ſuch union with Chriſt, conſiſts in the actual agreement of the heart with Chriſt, and ſuiting and adopting itſelf to him and redemption by him, or actively receiving and embracing the teſtimony given concerning him, in exerciſes conformable to this revelation, as a revelation of inviſible things, which are ſupernatural and wonderful, altogether beyond the notice of our ſenſes, and above our reaſon and comprehenſion; a revelation of an inviſible, wonderful, divine Saviour, and his ſupernatural, miraculous works of power and grace, and as one who was dead, and yet is alive, and lives forever; a revelation not of a law or command, as an expreſſion of the authority of God, demanding ſomething of us which we ſhould render to him, as the price of his favour; but a revelation of his ſufficiency for us; his wonderful grace and mercy to us, needy, helpleſs creatures, infinitely unworthy and guilty: A revelation of a way of ſalvation conſiſting in deliverance from infinite inviſible evil, and the poſſeſſion of good things which are unſeen, ſpiritual, incomprehenſible, future and eternal; which are all freely offered to him who will receive them, however unworthy and ill deſerving he be. When the ſoul actively conforms in its views and exerciſes to ſuch a revelation and teſtimony

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as this, and acquiesces in the truths and objects revealed, as certain realities, excellent and divine, it does actively unite itself to Jesus Christ; and in this active union to him consists. And that act, and that course of exercises of the heart, which are proper and suitable to such an exhibition as this, to a revelation by God of such things, may most properly be called *believing*, receiving, seeking, looking, trusting, or in one word, FAITH. It may be presumed that no word can be found which so properly and fully expresses those views and exercises of the mind, by which it actively unites itself to Christ, as he is revealed in the gospel, as the word *Faith*, according to the proper meaning of the word in the original, as it was used when the New Testament was written; or according to the meaning and general use of the word *Faith*.

The revelation which God first made to innocent man, was a law, or covenant of works, expressing his will and authority in requiring of them supreme and perfect respect and love, which they must render to him, as the price of his favour, and which he would reward with eternal life; and the least neglect of duty required, he threatned with his awful displeasure. This is properly called a law, or covenant of WORKS; and compliance with such a revelation and command consists in *works*, working in order to a reward. These are "The *works* of the law."

The revelation made in the gospel, which is the exhibition of a covenant of grace to guilty man, is exceedingly divers, in many respects, from the other. This is not a manifestation of the authority of God as lawgiver, demanding obedience as a worthiness to recommend to his favour and rewards; but the revelation of a Saviour for lost man; the unspeakable free gift of God, as a remedy suited to his necessities; the offer of free undeserved mercy and glorious grace, through a worthy Mediator; and every one is invited to partake in this wonderful glorious

glorious provision, however unworthy and guilty. Here then no virtue or moral goodness is, or can be *given*, as a price of the salvation exhibited and offered; but all the virtue and holiness that can be exercised in this case, consists in believing and receiving the things exhibited and offered, or acquiescing in them as real and excellent. And this, as it is opposed to obedience or works, as a worthiness to recommend to favour and a reward, is more properly called FAITH.

The Apostle Paul makes this distinction, as a very important one. He calls the gospel *The law of Faith*, by which he distinguishes it from the first covenant, and sets it in opposition to it, which he calls *The law of works*. "Where is boasting then?—It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay, but by the law of faith."* The gospel, or covenant of grace, is the law of faith. It is a revelation and testimony, a proper conformity to which, puts on that peculiar form, which is best denominated by calling it FAITH, in distinction from the obedience required by the law of works. He sets this in the same light in the following words. "Received ye the spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"† Here he sets the covenant, or law of works, in opposition to the hearing of faith, or the report or revelation of the gospel or covenant of grace. The former requires works, perfect works, as the price of a reward: The latter brings and offers all good to him who will *receive* it, or which is the same, to him who believeth. In this same view he puts faith in opposition to the works of the law, or obedience to a covenant of works, in the following words, "Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law."‡ To seek righteousness, as it were by the works of the law, is to do works, or attempt acts of obedience to law, with a view to offer this as their righteousness,

* Rom. iii. 27. † Gal. iii. 2. ‡ Rom. ix. 32.

righteouſneſs, and worthineſs, to recommend themſelves hereby to acceptance and favour with God. To ſeek righteouſneſs by faith, is to receive and truſt in the atonement and righteouſneſs of the Mediator, or cordially to embrace the goſpel, which is evangelical obedience, and as much a work, and exerciſe of goſpel holineſs, as any obedience to the goſpel whatever, and is the obedience of faith, as has been proved.

From the foregoing, the following queſtion may ariſe in the minds of ſome.

QUESTION. The Apoſtle Paul, ſays men are not juſtified by works: But if ſaving faith implies works, and cannot be diſtinguiſhed from evangelical obedience, and men are juſtified by faith; they are really juſtified by works, or evangelical obedience. Is there not an inconſiſtency in this? And why is not evangelical holineſs, a righteouſneſs which recommends him who has it to the favour of God, as a moral worthineſs, and a ground of boaſting?

ANSWER. What has been already ſaid, is a full anſwer to the firſt part of this queſtion; and it is preſumed every one who has underſtood it, will ſee the queſtion to be wholly without ground. By the works and deeds of the law, is meant obedience to law as a covenant of works, in order to obtain the righteouſneſs of the law, to be thereby recommended to the favour of God, as has been obſerved and ſhewn. This the Apoſtle oppoſes to faith, but does not oppoſe evangelical holineſs to faith, but conſiders theſe as implying each other; which goſpel obedience, is not offered as a righteouſneſs to recommend; but conſiſts in renouncing all worthineſs or claim to any favour, and receiving pardon and ſalvation as a free gift, to an infinitely unworthy and ill deſerving ſinner. This

point,

point, and the latter part of the queſtion, will be more particularly conſidered in the next ſection.

IMPROVEMENT.

I. FROM the above deſcription of ſaving faith, taken from the holy ſcripture, we learn that what has been called ſaving faith by ſome, is not ſo.

1. Saving faith does not conſiſt in a perſon's believing that his ſins are forgiven, that Jeſus Chriſt died for him, and he ſhall be ſaved, and the like. A perſon may have a ſtrong and moſt confident perſuaſion of this, without any good reaſon for it, and all may be groſs deluſion. No one can have any ground for ſuch a belief, until he has exerciſed ſaving faith, and has evidence that he does believe in Chriſt, repent, &c. for none but ſuch are pardoned, or can have any evidence that they ſhall be ſaved. Men muſt *firſt* repent and believe in Chriſt, in order to pardon, and a title to ſalvation, and therefore they cannot know or have any evidence that they are forgiven and ſhall be ſaved, until they have exerciſed ſaving faith. To believe they ſhall be ſaved, from any other ſuppoſed evidence, is mere deluſion, and contrary to the expreſs declaration of ſcripture. Indeed, a perſon's faith, which conſiſts in true taſte and diſcerning, and a cordial embracing the goſpel, may be ſo ſtrong and ſenſible, as to be attended with a conſciouſneſs and aſſurance that he does believe with a ſaving faith; and conſequently that he is pardoned, and ſhall be ſaved. But ſaving faith does not conſiſt in this belief and aſſurance; but muſt firſt exiſt in the mind, as the proper ground of ſuch conſciouſneſs and aſſurance. Therefore, the former, may, and often, if not commonly, does take place, without the latter.

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2. A mere ſpeculative belief of the truth, not including any exerciſe of heart, is not ſaving faith. This, it is preſumed, has been abundantly proved from ſcripture.

3. Saving faith does not conſiſt in that belief, which includes works of the law, done in order to recommend perſons to the divine favour, on account of their moral worth and excellence. This is the faith for which Arminians have plead. They ſay, true faith implies good works: But by good works they evidently mean, what the Apoſtle Paul means by the works of the law, done as the price of the favour of God; and not evangelical obedience, which ſtands oppoſed to the former, as it has been deſcribed above. Their faith and their works are wholly antichriſtian; and therefore oppoſed to true evangelical ſaving faith.

4. That is not ſaving faith which can be ſeparated, even in theory, from good works, and evangelical obedience. This has been abundantly proved from ſcripture in this ſection. It has been too common for thoſe who deſcribe faith as implying exerciſe of heart, even a cordial reception of Chriſt, yet to ſpeak of good works and goſpel holineſs and obedience, as the fruit and effect, of which ſaving faith is the cauſe, and as if they were two diſtinct things. It is not agreeable to ſcripture to make ſuch a diſtinction. It is inconſiſtent with their own definition of faith, and contrary to the truth; and therefore of a bad tendency.

5. That is not ſaving faith which precedes regeneration, and the new heart. Some have ſuppoſed that the impenitent, unrenewed perſon believes, and by this faith, his heart is renewed, and becomes penitent and obedient. This is contrary to ſcripture and all reaſon, which has been made evident. Faith implies a right diſpoſition of heart, and therefore does not precede it, and produce it. No perſon, but a regenerate one, has ſaving faith.

II. THE view we have had of ſaving faith ſerves to ſhow why it is repreſented in ſcripture as a duty; and men are commanded to believe on Jeſus Chriſt: And why unbelief is repreſented as wholly inexcuſable, and a great ſin.

If ſaving faith did conſiſt in mere ſpeculation, and the heart had no concern in it, and no degree of diſpoſition and exerciſe of that were implied in believing, it could not be required as a duty, or unbelief condemned and forbidden as a ſin. For that in which the heart has no concern, and which does not imply any exerciſe of diſpoſition or will, is neither virtue nor vice, ſin nor holineſs: It has no moral good or evil in it; and cannot be the ſubject of command or prohibition, of blame or commendation. But whatſoever implies exerciſe of the heart, and depends upon the diſpoſition of that, and in any meaſure conſiſts in this, is morally right, or wrong, holineſs or ſin, and muſt be commanded or forbidden. As therefore ſaving faith implies the whole of chriſtian obedience and holineſs, it muſt be conſidered not only as a duty, but as compriſing the whole of it: And unbelief muſt imply the contrary, and therefore be wholly criminal.

Agreeable to this, we find men are commanded in ſcripture to believe on Jeſus Chriſt; and this faith is every where repreſented as a duty. It is needleſs to mention all the particular paſſages of ſcripture which prove this, to the attentive reader of the Bible; the following are ſufficient to eſtabliſh this point. "Jeſus came into Galilee, preaching the goſpel of the kingdom of God, and ſaying, "Repent ye, and *believe the goſpel.*"* "Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, *this is* the work of God, *that ye believe on him whom he hath ſent.*"† "Ye believe in God, *believe alſo in me.*"‡ "And this is his commandment, that ye ſhould believe on the name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt."§

On

* Mark i. 14, 15. † John vi. 29. ‡ John xiv. 1. § 1 John iii. 23.

On the contrary, unbelief is conſidered as a great ſin. Our Saviour blames and condemns the Jews for not believing on him, and aſcribes it to the corrupt and wicked diſpoſition of their hearts. And unbelief is aſcribed wholly to an evil heart, and forbidden in the epiſtle to the Hebrews. "Take heed, brethren, leſt there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."* Our divine teacher not only repreſents unbelief as a ſin of the firſt magnitude, but as comprehending all the ſin of which men are guilty under the goſpel. "And when he (the Holy Spirit) is come, he will remove the world of ſin, *becauſe they believe not on me.*"† "Not to believe the record God has given of his Son, is to make him a liar."‡ To ſlight and reject Jeſus Chriſt, which is unbelief, as it is oppoſed to faith, is the greateſt ſin of which man can be guilty; and every ſin which men commit under the goſpel, is unbelief, or a ſin of unbelief, as it carries in it oppoſition to Chriſt, and a rejection of him. Therefore, as ſaving faith, taken in its full latitude, comprehends all goſpel duty or evangelical holineſs, ſo unbelief involves all the ſin which men commit under the goſpel.

III. FROM the above account of ſaving faith, we learn, that the intereſt of holineſs is ſecured and promoted in the ſalvation of ſinners by faith in Jeſus Chriſt.

The doctrine of juſtification by faith alone, has been objected to and oppoſed by many, as a doctrine tending to licentiouſneſs, and encouraging men to neglect good works and an holy life, depending on their faith to ſave them. But this objection has been formed wholly from ignorance of the doctrine, and miſunderſtanding it, not knowing what is implied in ſaving faith.

It is true, that many have abuſed this doctrine, and expected to be ſaved by a ſpurious, dead faith, without works

* Chap. iii. 12. † John xvi. 8, 9. ‡ 1 John v. 10.

works and holineſs of life; but this affords no argument againſt the doctrine, rightly underſtood; for there is no truth of the goſpel which is not liable to be miſunderſtood, and abuſed to bad purpoſes, and which has not been ſo abuſed. Such there were in the days of the Apoſtles, whoſe dangerous miſtake and wicked abuſe of this doctrine, the Apoſtle James expoſes and confutes, by ſhewing what ſaving faith is, viz. That true holineſs, and all the virtue and life contained in good works, is implied in ſaving faith and comes into the nature of it; and that faith which does not imply, and is not all this, will not ſave; but is a vain dead faith. This is the faith which has been deſcribed in this ſection, as has been ſhewn, by explaining what this Apoſtle ſays upon it.

If faith implies the whole of evangelical holineſs, then men cannot be juſtified and ſaved by faith without holineſs; and holineſs of heart and life is as neceſſary, as it could be, were they juſtified by the works of the law.

There is as real holineſs exerciſed in approving of the holy character of Chriſt, and the way of ſalvation by him, and in receiving him, ſubmiting to him, and truſting in him, as there can be in obedience to law, as a covenant of works. There is as real love to the law of God, and conformity of heart to it, in approving and truſting in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, for pardon and ſalvation, which conſiſts in his honouring the law, by ſuffering the penalty of it, and obeying it, as there would be in obeying the law perfectly, as our own righteouſneſs, were this poſſible.

IV. It appears from what has been ſaid, on this ſubject of ſaving faith, that the Apoſtles, Paul and James, are perfectly conſiſtent, wherein they have been, by ſome, thought to differ. Their conſiſtence and agreement will appear, only by obſerving, that the Apoſtle Paul means the

the ſame thing by "faith which worketh by love," which the Apoſtle James does, by faith which operates by works, and by works is made perfect, as the working life of faith. By this living, active, holy faith, implying all the good works and goſpel obedience of a chriſtian, James ſays, a man is juſtified, and cannot be juſtified by any other kind of faith, which does not include all this. Paul ſays, a man is juſtified by faith, and that this faith operates by love, as the life and active nature of it, in which all the holineſs and good works of a chriſtian are implied and conſiſt. In this they perfectly agree, and aſſert the ſame thing in different words. The Apoſtle Paul oppoſes this faith to *the works of the law*, to obedience to law as a covenant of works, as the price of the favour of God; and it has been ſhewn above, wherein the difference and oppoſition, between theſe, conſiſt: Therefore, it is needleſs to repeat it here. The Apoſtle James ſays nothing relating to the works of the law; and ſpeaks only of thoſe works which are implied in faith and chriſtian obedience, or the *obedience of faith*.

V. FROM the view we have had of ſaving faith, we may learn why pardon of ſin and ſalvation are in the Bible promiſed to the leaſt degree of true holineſs and chriſtian obedience, in whatever way it be exerciſed; ſuch as love to God, or to our neighbour; and to our fellow chriſtians; to hungering and thirſting after righteouſneſs, humility, meekneſs, a forgiving ſpirit, &c.— The reaſon is, not becauſe evangelical holineſs in the leaſt degree of it, is only *a ſign of faith*, as ſomething diſtinct from it; but becauſe it is ſaving faith itſelf, and is that in the exerciſe of which the ſoul does unite itſelf to Chriſt: For every holy exerciſe of the chriſtian has the nature of ſaving faith in it, as has been ſhown. Every act of goſpel holineſs is connected with pardon and ſalva-

tion, as it is an act of faith, and implies in it a believing in Chriſt, and acceptance of pardon and ſalvation, as a free, undeſerved gift.

Therefore, any perſon may know that he has ſaving faith, if he have evidence that he does exerciſe any degree of real holineſs, in any branch of it.

VI. WE may hence ſee why ſaving faith is the gift of God; and in what reſpect it is ſo. The Apoſtle Paul ſays, "By grace are ye ſaved, through faith; and that not of yourſelves; it is the gift of God."* "For unto you it is given, in the behalf of Chriſt, *not only to believe on him*, but alſo to ſuffer for his ſake."† The diſciples of Chriſt prayed him to *increaſe their faith*.‡

Chriſt ſays, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath ſent me, draw him. It is written in the Prophets, And they ſhall all be taught of God.—Every man therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."§ And he ſaid to Peter, when he profeſſed his faith in him, as the Son of God, "Bleſſed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for fleſh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."‖

Faith is the gift of God, as holineſs is his gift, becauſe they involve each other, and are really the ſame. If ſaving faith did not imply holineſs, and were not holineſs itſelf, it would be no more the gift of God, than any of the natural exerciſes of unrenewed men, and in no other ſenſe: For there would be no more oppoſition to it in their hearts, than to any thing elſe whatſoever. It is the holineſs of ſaving faith which puts it out of the reach of the unrenewed man, and all the difficulty of believing on Chriſt lies in this, and this is the only ground of the oppoſition of the carnal mind to ſaving faith. This difficulty

* Eph. ii. 8. † Phil. i. 29. ‡ Luke xvii. 5.
§ John vi. 44, 45. ‖ Matth. xvi. 17.

culty and oppoſition to believing, therefore, cannot be removed in any poſſible way, but by "Taking away the ſtony heart, and giving a new heart, by which men are created in Chriſt Jeſus, unto good works, being ſaved by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt." This point is illuſtrated by what has been obſerved in the preceding ſection, on divine illumination.

SECTION VII.

On the Sinner's Juſtification by Faith in Chriſt.

THIS doctrine has been conſidered by calviniſtic divines, even in the ſenſe in which they underſtand it, of great importance, and eſſential to the ſyſtem of truth revealed in the ſcriptures, ſo that if it be ſecluded, or not underſtood, the whole ſyſtem of chriſtian doctrine falls with it, and comes to nothing. And if we attend to the writings of the Apoſtle Paul, eſpecially his letters to the churches at Rome and Galatia, we ſhall find that he conſiders the doctrine of juſtification by faith in Chriſt, for which he earneſtly contends, as eſſential to the chriſtian ſcheme; ſo that Chriſt and chriſtianity can be of no advantage to them, who oppoſe and reject it. What is propoſed in this ſection, is, to attempt to explain this doctrine, according to the ſcripture; and to evince the truth and importance of it.

What has been already ſaid, in the foregoing part of this ſyſtem, concerning the law of God; the apoſtacy of man, and the guilty loſt ſtate in which he is; the nature and demerit of ſin; the character, deſign and work of the Redeemer; and the nature of ſaving faith, prepares

the way to underſtand the doctrine we are now to conſider, as it is involved in theſe particular truths, as the foundation of it; and the proper application of them to this ſubject, will ſhow what is meant by being juſtified by faith in Jeſus Chriſt, according to the ſcripture, and that it is an important and eſſential article of the chriſtian doctrine.

The juſtification of a ſinner, now under conſideration, conſiſts in forgiving his ſins, or acquiting him from the curſe and condemnation of the law; and receiving him to favour, and a title to all the bleſſings contained in eternal life; which is treating him as well, at leaſt, as if he never had ſinned, and had been always perfectly obedient. Though theſe may be conſidered diſtinctly, as in ſome reſpects two, yet they are never ſeparated, but are both always implied in the juſtification of a ſinner. Both theſe are mentioned by St. Paul, as included in juſtification by faith. "Therefore, being juſtified by faith, *we have peace with God*, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. By whom alſo we have acceſs by faith into this grace wherein we ſtand, and *rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*"* By faith men are juſtified, in which they receive the forgiveneſs of their ſins, and are made heirs of an eternal inheritance, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jeſus Chriſt, agreeable to the following words of Chriſt. "That they may receive forgiveneſs of ſins, and inheritance among them which are ſanctified, by faith that is in me."†

For the illuſtration of this point, the following things muſt be obſerved.

I. THE ſinner has nothing in himſelf, nor is it poſſible he ever ſhould have any thing, that could render it proper and reaſonable that he ſhould, out of reſpect to that, be pardoned and received to favour. He is under the curſe

* Rom. v. 1, 2. † Acts xxvi. 18.

curſe of the law, which curſes every one who once tranſgreſſes it. Therefore, every ſinner is under this curſe, who is not delivered from it by Jeſus Chriſt. Thus St. Paul ſtates the caſe, "For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curſe: For it is written, Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them. Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us."* The law curſes the ſinner, and leaves him under the curſe; and that is all the law can do.—The curſe dooms him to eternal deſtruction, as the juſt puniſhment of his crime; unleſs by ſome means it can be taken off, and yet the law be maintained and honoured as juſt and good. Nothing that can be done by the ſinner to make atonement for his ſin or recommend himſelf to favour, will do any thing towards removing the curſe. The reaſon of this is plain, and eaſy to be ſeen. The ſin of which he has been guilty, is an infinite evil, and has therefore rendered him infinitely ill deſerving. It is as a weight infinitely heavy lying upon him; and he muſt eternally ſink under it. Though he had all poſſible finite power, it could not remove it, or lighten it in the leaſt degree; for finite power is nothing before an infinite weight, and can do nothing to remove, or make it leſs. Suppoſing the ſinner comes to repentance, renounces his ſin, returns to his duty, and becomes perfectly holy and obedient; he does no more than his preſent duty, by the ſuppoſition. This cannot make up, or atone for his paſt faults, or do any thing towards it; and therefore can do nothing towards removing the curſe.—Beſides, if he could do more than his preſent duty, and continued in his obedience a thouſand years, or ever ſo long, this would do nothing towards removing the curſe, or counterbalancing his crime; for his crime is infinite,

* Gal. iii. 10, 13.

and all that he offers, or can offer, by his obedience, is but finite at moſt; and therefore as juſt nothing towards counterbalancing his guilt; as what is finite ſinks into nothing, in compariſon with that which is infinite.—When that which is infinite is put into one ſcale, and ſomething finite in the other, the latter does nothing towards weighing down or lightening the former, and is juſt as if there were nothing put into the ſcale againſt that which is infinite. For the ſame reaſon, no paſt obedience of a creature will in the leaſt extenuate a crime committed, after a courſe of obedience, however long, but he is as guilty, and deſerves puniſhment as much, as if he had performed no antecedent obedience, according to the divine law. It cannot be remembered in his favour, when he has once tranſgreſſed. It cannot prevent, remove, or lighten the curſe in the leaſt degree. No preceding or conſequent obedience, can atone for the tranſgreſſion, or remove or mitigate the curſe. Sin being an infinite evil, and deſerving an infinite puniſhment, it ſwallows up, cancels and reduces to nothing, all the poſſible holineſs of the creature, whether it take place before or after the ſin; ſo that it cannot be reckoned in his favour, any more than if he had no holineſs; for the law ſays, "Curſed is every one that *continueth not in all things*, written in the book of the law, to do them."

II. GOD will not ſhow favour to the ſinner, by pardoning and ſaving him, ſo as in the leaſt degree to counteract and diſregard his holy law: And therefore, will not, cannot, conſiſtently forgive him, or treat him any otherwiſe than as an accurſed creature, on account of any thing amiable or worthy in him, while no righteouſneſs and worthineſs, anſwerable to the demands of his law, can be reckoned and properly improved in his favour. The law of God is perfectly reaſonable and right: It is found-

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ed in the divine character and perfections. It is the voice of God. He looks upon the sinner just as the law represents him, as infinitely odious and ill-deserving; and he cannot be rendered acceptable to God, and obtain his pardon, on the account of any thing which is not agreeable to this law, and consistent with paying a proper regard to it in all respects. Hence it is impossible that the sinner should be pardoned and restored to favour, on account of his own worthiness and righteousness.

III. IN Jesus Christ the Redeemer, there is righteousness and worthiness enough to answer the law, and to deliver the sinner from the curse of it, and recommend him to all the favour he wants, when it may be with propriety reckoned in his favour; or when he is interested in it, so that he may, consistently with reason and truth, have the benefit of it.* "He is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth."† He has been made a curse, that he might deliver all who believe in him from the curse of the law.‡ And God can be just, can act consistent with his righteousness, and make a display of it, and do no injury to himself, his law and government, or to his creatures, but maintain the rights of all; and yet justify the sinner who believes in Jesus. "Being justified freely, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ: When God hath set forth a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness; *that* he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus."§ The scripture represents all favour, pardon of sin, redemption and eternal life, as given to men, not out of regard to any righteousness or worthiness of theirs; but purely for the sake of Christ, out of

* This has been before considered, in stating the character, design and work of the Redeemer. Part II. Chap. II, III.

† Rom. x. 4. ‡ Gal. iii. 13. § Rom. iii. 24, 26.

of regard for the atonement he has made by his own blood, and his righteouſneſs and worthineſs. The whole that is comprized in redemption, pardon of ſin, peace with God, and eternal life, are given *through* Chriſt, that is, on his account, and for his ſake. "Therefore, being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God, *through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*"* "Being juſtified freely by his grace, *through the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt.*"† Righteouſneſs recommends to favour; this the juſtified ſinner has not in himſelf, but in Chriſt. His righteouſneſs is unto all, and upon all them that believe. He is the end of the law for righteouſneſs.‡ On this St. Paul placed his whole dependence. He ſays, "I count all things but loſs for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus, my Lord: For whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Chriſt, and be found in him; not having mine own righteouſneſs, which is of the law; but that which is through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith."§ Believers are accepted *in the beloved*, that is, purely out of reſpect to the worthineſs of Chriſt.¶ Therefore, they are directed to aſk for all the favour they want, in his name, that is, for his ſake.

IV. IN order to be intereſted in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, ſo as to have the benefit of it, and be recommended to favour, and juſtified on his account, and for his ſake, it is neceſſary, that men ſhould be *united* to him by a peculiar union, ſo as to be the members of the body of which he is the head.

This union, or relation, which actually takes place between Chriſt and the juſtified, by which they obtain this privilege, it has been before obſerved, is repreſented by various ſimilitudes; by the union of the branches with the

* Rom. v. 1. † Chap. iii. 24. ‡ Rom. iii. 22. x. 4.
§ Phil. iii. 8, 9. ¶ Eph. i. 6.

the vine, by which they are one tree, and have the ſame life and ſap running through the whole: By the head and members, which make one body: By the union of huſband and wife, by which they become one fleſh, and the wife ſhares in the riches, worthineſs and honours of the huſband, however poor, mean and unworthy ſhe was, antecedent to her union to him. This union of the juſtified with Chriſt, is often expreſſed in ſcripture by being IN Chriſt. "That I may win Chriſt, and be found IN him."* And, "we are *in* him that is true, even in his Son Jeſus Chriſt."† "Abide *in* me, and I *in* you."‡

The children of the firſt Adam, were to partake of the benefit of his righteouſneſs, had he, by his obedience, obtained the righteouſneſs of the law; and they do actually ſhare with him in the evil conſequences of his ſin, by virtue of their union with him. He and they are naturally united, as he is their common progenitor, and they his poſterity. And by divine conſtitution he was appointed in ſuch a ſenſe, their common, public head, that the effects of his righteouſneſs, ſhould he obtain it, or his ſin, ſhould he tranſgreſs, ſhould be tranſmitted to them. Yet they could not be juſtified by his obedience or righteouſneſs, or condemned for his ſin, without an expreſs, or implicit, *moral*, voluntary union to him, which was indeed ſuppoſed and ſecured by the conſtitution. If Adam had obeyed the law perfectly, and obtained righteouſneſs and life, his children could not have the benefit of it when they came to exiſt, in any other way, but by a moral, voluntary union of heart to him, by approving of his character and conduct, and of that conſtitution, which in this way, would bring them to ſhare in the benefit of his obedience, ſo that they ſhould have the benefit of his righteouſneſs, and be made heirs of eternal life, without being in a ſtate of trial themſelves. And were it poſſible, in that caſe, and ſhould any of his poſ-

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* Phil. iii. 8, 9. † 1 John v. 20. ‡ John xv. 4.

terity actually withhold their conſent to what their father had done, and refuſe to be thus united to him, and to be juſtified in this way, they muſt be excluded from all intereſt in his righteouſneſs, and benefit by it. And ſince Adam did ſin, guilt and condemnation came upon his poſterity by their moral union to him, by either an implicit or expreſs conſent to his ſinning, and approbation of him in this character. Therefore, if there be any one of the human race, who has lived heretofore, is now on the ſtage, or ſhall exiſt from this time to the end of the world, who never conſents in any degree, either explicitly, or by implication, to the firſt tranſgreſſion; but perfectly and conſtantly, through life, refuſes to unite himſelf to him as a ſinner; that is, does not commit one ſin, but continues perfectly holy, he will not partake of any of the guilt of the ſin of Adam, nor be condemned by any law or conſtitution whatever.

The ſecond Man, the laſt Adam, of whom the firſt was a figure and type, is as really a public head and ſubſtitute for others, as the firſt, but not in every reſpect and circumſtance like him; yea, infinitely different in ſome reſpects. He has ſo far united himſelf to man, as to become a real man, and take the place of man, under the law; and has made full atonement for ſin, by taking the curſe on himſelf, and ſuffering it in man's ſtead, the juſt for the unjuſt; and has obtained the righteouſneſs of the law by perfect obedience to it; by which he has brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs, a righteouſneſs unſpeakably more excellent, and meritorious, and worthy of reſpect and reward, than all poſſible obedience of men or angels. And having thus obtained all that ſinful loſt man wants, in order to complete his redemption and happineſs, he freely offers himſelf, with all his fulneſs, for man, to every one who comes within hearing of the goſpel, and is willing to be united to him, and receive him, with the

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bleſſings he has to give, without money or price, without requiring or expecting any returns to be made by the ſinner, as any degree of compenſation.

But all this does not put the ſinner in poſſeſſion of the pardon of his ſins, and a title to life. But he will as certainly periſh in his ſins, as if there had been no ſuch Redeemer, unleſs a moral union take place between him and the Saviour, by his hearty approbation of his character, of his deſign, and of what he has done and ſuffered for the ſalvation of men; and he, cordially unite himſelf to him, in the character he ſuſtains, as the Redeemer of ſinners. It is not proper, it is not right and fit, it is incongruous, and therefore impoſſible, that he ſhould have any intereſt in the atonement and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, ſo as to be pardoned and received to favour, out of reſpect to that, while with his whole heart he oppoſes and rejects him, and is diſpoſed not to come to him, that he might have life; becauſe by this there is a moral diſcord between him and the Redeemer, and oppoſition to him, and refuſal to be in any union or relation to him.

If a rich and honourable prince, offer himſelf to a mean woman, who is poor and greatly in debt, to be her huſband, and make her honourable, rich and happy, this will not put her in poſſeſſion of theſe benefits, or give her the leaſt intereſt in them, or title to them, unleſs ſhe conſents to take him as her huſband, and cordially receive him as he offers himſelf. It is by accepting the offer that the relation of huſband and wife takes place, and they are ſo united as to become one fleſh, in conſequence of which ſhe becomes rich and honourable, by the intereſt ſhe has in her huſband's riches and honours.

So, no ſinner can obtain an intereſt in the atonement and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, unleſs there be a real conſent of heart, either explicit or implied, to receive him as he offers himſelf, by which a moral union, or union of heart,

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exiſts between him and the Saviour, by which they are, in ſuch a ſenſe and degree ONE, that it is proper to reckon or impute the righteouſneſs of the Redeemer to the ſinner, ſo that he ſhall have as much benefit by it, as if it were perſonally his righteouſneſs.

It has been thought by ſome, that if the ſin of Adam be not imputed to his poſterity, and they conſidered as guilty and condemned, antecedent to their union to him, by conſenting to his ſin, there is no parallel between the imputation of the ſin of Adam to his children, and of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt to them who believe in him, which the Apoſtle Paul ſuppoſes there is, and aſſerts in the fifth chapter of his letter to the Romans. But the above repreſentation of this point, may ſerve to ſhow, that this objection is groundleſs. As the poſterity of Adam become guilty, and fall under condemnation, by conſenting to his ſin, and a union of heart to him, as a tranſgreſſor; that is, by ſinning themſelves: ſo the righteouſneſs of the Mediator comes upon men, or is imputed to them, for their juſtification, by their uniting themſelves to him in a cordial approbation of his righteouſneſs, and his holy character. It is true there is a neceſſary difference in many reſpects, but in this there is a parallel.

One great and remarkable difference, beſides thoſe mentioned in that chapter by St. Paul, is, that the firſt Adam, was conſtituted the public head and repreſentative of all the human race, of whom he was the natural head and father, ſo that they ſhould be holy or ſinful, and conſequently juſtified or condemned, according to his conduct in a ſtate of trial, as he ſhould perſevere in obedience, or fall by tranſgreſſion. The conſtitution or covenant with the firſt Adam, ſecured the obedience and holineſs of all his children, that they ſhould be united in their hearts to him, by a cordial, voluntary approbation of his character and righteouſneſs, if he

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ſhould perſevere in obedience through the time of his trial, and conſequently have eternal life. And, on the contrary, if he ſhould be guilty of diſobedience, all his children ſhould join with him in his rebellion, as ſoon as they exiſted capable of moral agency, and have that in their hearts, which, at leaſt, would imply a full conſent to his tranſgreſſion, and in their hearts unite with him in it, and conſequently fall under condemnation with him. Thus, by one man ſin entered into the world, and has ſpread, and taken hold of all the children of Adam; and by ſin they are involved in condemnation and the curſe.*

The laſt Adam, the Redeemer of men, has no ſuch particular relation and union to all the human race, either by nature, or divine conſtitution, as the firſt Adam had. He has indeed become a man, and united himſelf to the human nature, and in conſequence of what he has done and ſuffered, he has obtained a righteouſneſs as ſufficient for the ſalvation of one as of another, of all as well as of one, or of any part: He is able to ſave to the uttermoſt, all them who believe in him, and come to God by him.† And conſequently invites all to come unto him, and be ſaved; and has ordered his goſpel to be preached to all nations, to every ſon and daughter of Adam. But there is no proviſion or ſecurity in any divine conſtitution, or the convenant of redemption between the Father and the Mediator, that all ſhall believe on him and unite themſelves to him, by a cordial approbation of his character and righteouſneſs; ſo as to render it fit and proper that they ſhould be juſtified and ſaved by him. But in this conſtitution, or covenant between the Father and the Son, only a certain number, a part of mankind, are given to the Redeemer, and the voluntary union of theſe to him by faith, by which the church, the body, of which he is the conſtituted head, ſhall be formed,

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* Rom. v. 12, 19. † Heb. vii. 25.

is ſecured and made certain. This is declared by Chriſt in the moſt expreſs, unequivocal words, "All that the Father giveth me, ſhall come to me, and him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out. And this is the Father's will who hath ſent me, *that of all which he hath given me*, I ſhould loſe nothing, but ſhould raiſe it up again at the laſt day. Father, I will that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou haſt given me."*

That Chriſt means by thoſe who were given to him, not only his preſent diſciples, but all that ſhould be finally ſaved by him; and that theſe are not all mankind, but a part, who are taken out of the reſt of the world, and to be united to him, and made one with him, as others are not, is evident from the following words of his. "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou haſt given me, for they are thine—And all mine are thine, and thine are mine. Neither pray I for thoſe alone (my preſent diſciples, whom I have been particularly mentioning) but for them alſo which ſhall believe on me, through their word: That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be *one* in us."†

To the firſt Adam, all the human race were given, to be juſtified or ruined by him, in the manner explained above. To the laſt Adam, only a part of mankind are given, to be redeemed and ſaved by him; and their actual and everlaſting union with him is made ſure, without which union they could not be juſtified and ſaved by him. They ſhall come unto him, and ſhall never be caſt out, or ſeparated from him.

Theſe who are given to Chriſt, the elect, are his ſeed. "When thou ſhalt make his ſoul an offering for ſin, *he ſhall ſee his ſeed*, and ſhall prolong his days, and the pleaſure of the Lord ſhall proſper in his hands. *A ſeed* ſhall ſerve

* John vi. 37, 39. xvii. 24. † John xvii. 9, 10, 20, 21.

ſerve him, it ſhall be accounted to the Lord for a generation."* They are his adopted children. "Behold, I, and the *children which God hath given me.* According as he hath choſen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we ſhould be holy, and without blame before him in love; having predeſtinated us unto the *adoption of children*, by Jeſus Chriſt, to himſelf, according to the good pleaſure of his will."† All mankind were the firſt Adam's ſeed, his children. The elect only, who were choſen and given to Chriſt, before the foundation of the world, are his ſeed, his children.‡

V. SINNERS are thus united to Chriſt by faith, or believing in him.

It has been ſhewn, in the preceding ſection, that ſaving faith conſiſts in a cordial approbation of Chriſt, and receiving him in the character he ſuſtains, as the Redeemer of ſinners, by which the ſinner unites himſelf to Chriſt, and becomes one heart, and one ſoul with him. It is by this faith, according to ſcripture, that the heart is ſo united to Chriſt, that he dwells in the heart; and by faith they come into the relation of children of God, and *put on* Chriſt. "Ye are the children of God, *by faith*

* Pſalms xxii. 30. Iſaiah liii. 10. † Eph. i. 4, 5. Heb. ii. 13.

‡ From this ſcriptural view of the matter, we ſee how contrary to the ſcripture, how unreaſonable, as well as whimſical their notion is, who advance, that Chriſt is originally ſo united to all mankind, that he and they are ſo *one*, that whatever one is and does, the other is and does alſo: ſo that the ſins of men are the ſins of Chriſt, and mankind did and ſuffered what was done and ſuffered by Chriſt. This they imagine is implied in the repreſentation of the union of Chriſt with his people; by the union of the head and members, of the human body; of the huſband and wife; the vine and the branches, &c. And that, on this ſuppoſition only, there can be any juſtice or propriety, in the ſuffering of Chriſt for the ſins of men, or in the juſtification or ſalvation of men by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt. And they hence infer, as a certain conſequence, that all mankind ſhall be ſaved. This conſequence is contrary to numerous expreſs declarations in divine revelation, and is built on a precarious ſandy foundation indeed. See Relly's Doctrine of Union.

faith in Chriſt Jeſus: For as many of you as have been baptized into Chriſt, have put on Chriſt. That Chriſt may dwell in your hearts *by faith*." * "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the ſons of God, even to them who believe on his name." † "He that hath the Son, hath life." ‡ Faith ſo unites the believer to Chriſt, that it is fit and proper that he ſhould be conſidered and treated as ſo far one with him, as to pardon and juſtify him for the ſake of Chriſt, out of reſpect to his ſufferings and obedience, by which he has merited ſuch favour for all his; for all who are thus united to him.

Therefore, it is abundantly declared in ſcripture, that men are juſtified by faith, or through faith: that faith is counted for righteouſneſs, and imputed to the believer for righteouſneſs; and the righteouſneſs by which they are juſtified, is called, "The righteouſneſs of faith," not becauſe there is any righteouſneſs in faith to juſtify the ſinner, or do any thing towards it; but becauſe faith receives the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and ſo unites the believer to the Redeemer, that by divine conſtitution and promiſe, the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is reckoned in his favour, and avails for his juſtification. Faith is not connected with juſtification, becauſe of any moral excellency or worthineſs, which is, or can be ſuppoſed to be in it; for the believing ſinner cannot have any ſuch worthineſs in himſelf, or in any of his exerciſes, as in the leaſt degree to recommend him to favour on that account, which is to be more particularly conſidered before this ſection is concluded; but men are juſtified by faith, becauſe it is connected with the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and the believer is ſo united to him that it is proper and fit that his righteouſneſs ſhould be improved in the ſinner's favour, and he be juſtified on that account. Therefore,

* Gal. iii. 26, 27. Eph. iii. 17. † John i. 12. ‡ 1 John v. 12.

fore, justification by faith, is always opposed to justification by works; the works of the law, especially, in the writings of the Apostle Paul, as has been particularly observed in the foregoing section, and the reason of it given. It will be sufficient to mention the following passages of his, omitting a great number of others to the same purpose. "But now the righteousness of God, without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the Prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe. Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law."* Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ; even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.† "That I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God, through faith:‡"

SOME

* Rom. iii. 22, 28. † Gal. ii. 16.

‡ Phil. iii. 9.——Some have supposed that by *the faith of Christ*, mentioned several times in the passages quoted, and in one or two other places, is meant *Christ's faith*, which intends the whole of the righteousness of Christ. But there does not appear any reason for such a construction. This is, at best, a very obscure and unusual way to express the obedience and righteousness of Christ. This the Apostle often mentions, and constantly holds up to view in his writings, in clear and intelligible expressions; such as, his righteousness; his dying for sinners, and giving himself for them; the atonement; his obedience; obedience unto death, &c.—And since he always means the faith of the believer, when he says men are justified by faith, except in these few places, it seems to be doing violence to those, to understand them in a quite different sense; especially, since the expression, though a little varied, may most naturally be understood to mean faith in Christ, or the faith by which men believe in him, and of which he is the object; and more especially, since this phrase must be understood so, in a number of other places. The following are instances of it. Mark xi. 22. "Have faith in God." Ἔχετε πίστιν Θεοῦ. *Have faith*

SOME have ſuppoſed that it was neceſſary to exclude all moral goodneſs, and conſequently all exerciſe of heart, from the faith by which men are juſtified, in order to their being juſtified by free grace, in oppoſition to juſtification by works; and have thought, that if there be any moral goodneſs in juſtifying faith, eſpecially all that moral goodneſs which is comprized in goſpel holineſs, as has been repreſented in the preceding ſection; they have a righteouſneſs of their own, which will recommend them to favour; and therefore do not ſtand in need, or, at moſt, in ſo much need of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and of free grace, as if they had no moral goodneſs; but have ſome ground of boaſting; and that this therefore, tends to flatter the pride of man: Whereas the ſcripture ſays, that the way of juſtification by faith excludes all boaſting; and that the *ungodly* who have no works, are juſtified by faith.

What has been already ſaid in the preceding ſection, and in this, it is thought, is ſufficient to ſhow, that ſuch an opinion is wholly without foundation, and contrary to the truth. But as this is a point of no ſmall importance, it is propoſed to attend to it more particularly, by bringing into view, and applying ſome things which have been before obſerved; and introducing ſome other conſiderations, which may ſerve to remove miſtakes, and elucidate and confirm the truth on this head. To this end the following things may be obſerved.

1. It is impoſſible, according to the reaſon and nature of things, and the law of God, which is founded on this, that he who has once ſinned, ſhould, by any moral qualification,

of God. Acts 3. 16. "Through faith in his name." In the original it is, *Through the faith of his name.* Rom. 3. 26. "The juſtifier of him that believeth in Jeſus." In the original it is, τον εκ πιστεως Ιησου—Him who is *of the faith of Jeſus.* Jam. ii. 1. "My brethren, have not the *faith of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, with reſpect of perſons." Rev. xiv. 12. "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and *the faith of Jeſus.*"

fication, or holiness, render himself acceptable to God, or so as to be looked upon, or treated any otherwise, than an accursed, infinitely odious creature. The reason of this has been given: It is because the law of God, which is most reasonable, just and good, does curse the transgressor; let his character be otherwise what it may, either before or after his sin, this cannot, in the least degree, remove the curse. "For it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, written in the book of the law, to do them." As this is the law of God, and perfectly agreeable to unalterable reason and truth, he will look upon the sinner in the light in which the law sets him, and treat him accordingly; and therefore will not pardon him, out of respect to any thing he does, or can do, as recommending him, in the least degree, to any favour. All moral qualifications of his, however great and good, must stand for just nothing, and be of no avail to recommend the sinner to pardon, &c. Whenever such an one is justified, it must be altogether on the account of the atonement and worthiness of Christ, who was made under the law; and so made a curse, that he might deliver the believer in him from the curse. And whatever moral goodness there is in faith, he is not justified on this account, any more than if there were no moral goodness in it. The believer obtains justification by his faith, not out of respect to any moral goodness in it, how much soever it may contain; but, because by it he is united to Christ, so as that it is proper he should have an interest in his righteousness, and be justified out of respect to that, and consistent with the law of God. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth."

It is indeed impossible that he who has once sinned, if he have any degree of virtue and true love to God, in the exercise of that, to seek or desire to recommend him-

ſelf to God by it, ſo as to obtain pardon and his favour, merely out of reſpect to that; for this would be to oppoſe God, and all goodneſs; to riſe in rebellion againſt his law, and holy government; and therefore, contrary to love to God, and all true virtue, or moral goodneſs.—The reaſon of this has been given, viz. That it is contrary to the law of God, which curſes the ſinner, that he ſhould be conſidered and treated any otherwiſe than as being accurſed, out of regard to any thing he has, or can do, and while he is not united to Chriſt, ſo as to have the benefit to his righteouſneſs, by receiving juſtification purely out of reſpect to that. Hence it is certain, that if a man ſeek righteouſneſs and juſtification by the works of the law, or by any ſuppoſed virtue or goodneſs of his own, he does in that, act as an enemy to God, and to his law; and his ſuppoſed moral goodneſs, is nothing but ſin and rebellion. But if it were not ſo, and he were really and perfectly holy, this could not recommend him to pardon; and would be no reaſon why he ſhould be pardoned, and delivered from the curſe of the law, rather than another, who is wholly deſtitute of all moral goodneſs. The reaſon of this has been given. Therefore, whenever he who has ſinned, is brought to love God, and exerciſe any degree of moral goodneſs, he will not deſire to be juſtified by it, and will be ſo far from offering it as a righteouſneſs to recommend him to favour, that he will approve of the law of God which curſes him, and condemns himſelf, as that does, as infinitely guilty and illdeſerving; and conſequently places all his hope of pardon in the atonement of Chriſt; and with Paul, not deſire to be found in his own righteouſneſs, which is of the law; but that which is through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs which is of God, by faith. But of this, more hereafter.

2. Though

2. Though a ſinner, upon his becoming perfectly obedient, after he had ſinned, might be juſtified by his own righteouſneſs, which has been proved to be impoſſible; yet man is cut off from all hope of acceptance in this way, becauſe every believer is, in this life, very imperfect, and ſinful. In every act of his, there is much ſin; ſin enough to condemn him, had he never ſinned before. He has a great degree of oppoſition in his heart to God, and his law; and all his exerciſes, in which there is a degree of moral goodneſs, are ſo defective, that he has reaſon to be aſhamed of himſelf, and of them; for every degree of defect is ſinful. He does not love God half ſo much as he ought, and his heart is exceeding corrupt and abominable, viewed in all the exerciſes and defects of it. On this account the believer is unworthy of any favour, his goodneſs is infinitely far from rendering him worthy of the leaſt favour; and every act of his is attended with ſin enough to condemn him forever, if viewed and treated as he is in himſelf, and according to his preſent character. In this view the Pſalmiſt ſays, "If thou, Lord, ſhouldeſt mark iniquities, O Lord, who ſhall ſtand! Enter not into judgment with thy ſervant: For in thy ſight, ſhall no man living be juſtified."* And Job ſays, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: But now mine eye ſeeth thee: Wherefore I abhor myſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes."†

When it is conſidered, how much ſin attends the believer in all his exerciſes; how far he falls below his duty in every thing; how much moral evil is conſtantly in his heart; and how greatly every thing wrong and defective in him is aggravated, and more criminal than it was before he believed, by the greater light and conviction he now has, and the great, peculiar and diſtinguiſhing favours he has received from God; and the advan-

* Pſalms cxxx. 3. cxliii. 2. † Job xlii. 5, 6.

tages and motives he now has to be holy as God is holy, by which his obligations are unſpeakably increaſed: When all this is conſidered; there will doubtleſs appear reaſon to conclude that he is now more criminal in the ſight of God, and in this ſenſe a greater ſinner, and more hateful and abominable, than he was before he believed, or than any unbeliever whatſoever, notwithſtanding his faith, virtue, and holineſs. Surely then he has nothing in himſelf ſuited to flatter and raiſe his pride, by becoming a believer, and uniting himſelf to Chriſt; but every thing is ſuited to lead him to humble himſelf in the ſight of the Lord, and walk humbly with God, and conſtantly cry, "God be merciful to me a ſinner."

This leads to another particular.

3. All the virtue or holineſs; all the right taſte and exerciſes which are implied in ſaving faith, as deſcribed in the foregoing ſection, as was there obſerved, imply and conſiſt chiefly in diſclaiming and renouncing all pretences to any worthineſs that the believer has, or can poſſibly be in man, that ſhould recommend him to any favour, and in coming to Chriſt, as in himſelf, infinitely guilty and illdeſerving, and truſting in his atonement and merit for juſtification. How then can this poſſibly lead men to truſt in themſelves that they are righteous, or flatter and encourage their pride? It is the only thing that deſtroys ſuch a ſpirit, and tends to pluck it up by the roots, and by which a believer humbles himſelf in the ſight of the Lord, and walks humbly before him all his days. The more of this faith he has, the farther he is from pride, and the more humble. And he who has not this faith, and does not live by it, his ſoul is lifted up in pride, and is not upright in him.*

Faith, which worketh by love, diſcerns the excellence of the divine character and law, and the infinite evil of ſin; approves of the former and condemns the latter.

In

* Hab. ii. 4.

In the exercise of this faith the law comes, sin revives, and the sinner dies; feels himself undone and lost forever, notwithstanding any help or righteousness in himself, if treated according to the righteous law of God. By this faith the sinner flies to the Redeemer for righteousness, justification and redemption, as a free gift to an infinitely unworthy creature, who has no righteousness of his own to recommend him to the least favour, and never can have any. And the more the sinner has of this faith, which implies love and repentance, and the longer he lives by it, the more he sees and feels the evil nature and ill desert of sin, and a view and sense of his own sinfulness increases; and the more he prizes and trusts in Christ for pardon, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. And if he be not really a greater criminal than he was before, he now sees much more of his sin and guilt, and a view and sense of this increases, as he grows in faith and grace. Thus all boasting is most effectually excluded by the law of faith, as faith itself discards and opposes all that which could be the ground of boasting.

Hence is appears, that they who exclude repentance and love from faith, take an effectual way to support boasting and the pride of man: For that faith in which there is no repentance, does not oppose the pride of the human heart, but leaves man as proud as before, and with the same disposition to exalt himself, and trust in himself that he is righteous. No one who has not a heart, that is truly penitent, and friendly to God, will humble himself before God, and be willing to be wholly indebted to free, sovereign grace for justification and redemption.*

4. If

* "There is that in the nature of repentance, which peculiarly tends to establish the contrary of justification by works; for nothing so much renounces our own worthiness and excellency, as repentance. The very nature of it is to acknowledge our own utter sinfulness and unworthiness, and

4. If faith did not imply a right taſte and diſpoſition, and true love to Chriſt, it would not in any manner or degree, unite the ſinner to Chriſt ſo as to render it fit and proper that his righteouſneſs ſhould be reckoned in his favour, or be any reaſon why ſuch a believer ſhould be juſtified, rather than another, who does not believe. It has been ſhewn, that in the ſcripture the believer is ſaid to be in a particular relation to Chriſt, to be *in* Chriſt, and to put him on; to be united to him as the wife is to the huſband, and the members of the body to the head; and that this union is by faith. This gives him an intereſt in Chriſt, as, on account of this union, he may with reaſon and propriety be conſidered and treated as belonging to Chriſt, ſo as to have the benefit of his worthineſs and righteouſneſs, for his juſtification; and in this ſenſe he is juſtified by faith. That faith therefore, which does not unite to Chriſt, cannot be juſtifying, ſaving faith. No faith can do this but that which implies love, for in this all true moral union conſiſts. That faith which is conſiſtent with the ſinner's being at heart an enemy to Chriſt, does in no true ſenſe unite to him, but is conſiſtent with the greateſt, with total alienation from him, and oppoſition to him. Therefore, there is no more reaſon or fitneſs that the man who has ſuch a faith ſhould be juſtified by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, than he who has it not, but is in every ſenſe an unbeliever.

It muſt be ſtill kept in mind, that faith does not bring into a juſtified ſtate, becauſe it is a good work, or out of reſpect to the moral goodneſs there is in it; but becauſe of the *natural* fitneſs there is, that he whoſe heart is united to Chriſt, as it is by believing, ſhould be recommended to favour, and juſtified by his worthineſs and righteouſneſs,

and to renounce our own goodneſs, and all confidence in ſelf; and to truſt in the propitiation of the Mediator, and aſcribe all the glory of forgiveneſs to him." Preſident Edwards's Diſcourſe on Juſtification by Faith alone, p. 114.

righteouſneſs, to whom he is thus united, and in whom he truſts. The believing ſinner is conſidered, when viewed in and by himſelf, as deſtitute of any thing to recommend him to favour, and as unworthy and illdeſerving, as if he had no faith, and no kind or degree of moral goodneſs: And muſt be viewed ſo, according to the reaſon of things, and the law of God; ſo that when he is juſtified, he is juſtified, as being *ungodly*, becauſe he really is ſo; that is, has no moral goodneſs, to recommend him, as the reaſon why he ſhould be juſtified, rather than another, who has no moral goodneſs. In this reſpect all are alike, and upon equal grounds. This leads us to the true ſenſe of the following words of the Apoſtle Paul, "To him that *worketh not*, but believeth on him that juſtifieth the *ungodly*, his faith is counted for righteouſneſs."*

By him that *worketh not*, is evidently meant one who does not attempt to work, in order to recommend himſelf to the favour of God by his moral goodneſs; is not of thoſe who are of the works of the law, and conſequently under the curſe of it, notwithſtanding any thing they can do; but renounces all pretence and deſire to be juſtified in this way, by his works; but directly contrary to this, believeth on him, and receives from him, as a free, undeſerved favour, juſtification, who gives it to all ſuch, though they have no righteouſneſs or works to recommend them; but are in this reſpect *ungodly*. This is evidently the Apoſtle's meaning; for he puts *not working*, and believing, in oppoſition to working in order to recommend themſelves and render themſelves worthy of a reward, ſo as, in this ſenſe, to bring God into debt to them. This appears by the foregoing words, with which thoſe are connected. "Now to him that *worketh*, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that *worketh not*, but *believeth* on him that

* Romans iv. 5.

that juſtifieth the ungodly, &c." By *working* he means the deeds, the works of the law, of which he ſpeaks, and ſets them in oppoſition to faith, as he does here. What is meant by working to merit a reward, has been often explained in the preceding ſection, and in this. Faith is oppoſed to this, and looks to Chriſt, and receives juſtification, pardon and righteouſneſs, as a free, undeſerved gift to the *ungodly*, that is, to one who has no good works, no worthineſs to recommend him to the leaſt favour, but is infinitely unworthy, guilty and illdeſerving. All this is conſiſtent with faith, implying and conſiſting in all that moral goodneſs, goſpel holineſs, and obedience, which, according to ſcripture it does, as has been ſhewn in the ſection on ſaving faith.

5. If moral goodneſs in juſtifying faith, would recommend the believer to favour, on account of the worth in it, and render a ſinner more worthy and deſerving, or leſs unworthy and illdeſerving in the ſight of God, and therefore is inconſiſtent with juſtification by free grace; and conſequently all moral goodneſs muſt be excluded from it; then it is equally neceſſary that the believer ſhould never have any moral goodneſs, in order to his being ſaved by grace. They who would exclude all moral goodneſs from faith, and ſuppoſe, if it involves repentance, and love, and is really a holy exerciſe, this moral goodneſs, would render the ſinner more deſerving, or leſs illdeſerving; and ſo would be inconſiſtent with his being juſtified wholly by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and ſaved by free grace; do ſuppoſe, at the ſame time, that goſpel holineſs and obedience is ſome how connected with ſaving faith, and does take place, ſooner or later, in the heart of every believer. But if moral goodneſs in thoſe who have ſinned, in itſelf conſidered, recommend to favour, and render them worthy of it; then when they attain to this they will have no more need of

the

the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, nor of free grace; but may and muſt truſt in their own righteouſneſs. And when they come to be perfectly holy, they may juſtly conſider themſelves as worthy of eternal life, and claim it as a debt, and not receive it as a free gift. Do not they who carefully exclude all moral goodneſs from ſaving faith, for the reaſon above mentioned, appear inconſiſtent with themſelves, in this reſpect? It is not yet ſeen how thoſe things can be reconciled.

But if what has been proved concerning the law of God, and the true ſtate of the ſinner, viz. that no poſſible degree of holineſs and obedience, continued any length of time by the ſinner, can atone for one ſin; but if he once tranſgreſs the law, he falls under the curſe of it, from which no moral goodneſs afterwards attained can deliver him, but he will forever deſerve to be the ſubject of the diſpleaſure of God, and condemned to eternal miſery: If this be kept in view it will appear, that whatever moral goodneſs he attains, it does not render him the leſs unworthy; and if he be pardoned and ſaved, it muſt be as much through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and as really a free gift to him, and he as much the ſubject of free grace, as if he had no moral good; and the believer muſt receive all favours, and continue in a juſtified ſtate, through life, however obedient he be; and forever, though perfectly holy, out of reſpect to the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and as a gift of free grace, as much as if he received juſtification at firſt. And there does not appear any inconſiſtence or difficulty in the matter, when viewed in this ſcripture light.

The redeemed, when perfectly holy in heaven, will, conſidered in and by themſelves, be as deſerving of the divine diſpleaſure and everlaſting puniſhment, as they ever were, and will be ſo forever. They continue in a juſtified ſtate, and in the enjoyment of the favour of God,

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by continuing united to Chriſt; and were it poſſible that this union between the Redeemer and them ſhould ceaſe, they would, they muſt fall under condemnation, and ſink into hell. It is true, that the obedience and holineſs of believers is acceptable to God, and may be rewarded, as a teſtimony of this, in conſequence of their union to Chriſt, and out of reſpect to his atonement and worthineſs, becauſe they are united to him, and love him, who is ſo infinitely worthy in the ſight of God. Their perſons and their obedience, and offerings to God, are pleaſing and acceptable to him for the ſake of Chriſt, and becauſe they belong to him, and are in him, and do all in his name. This is the account the ſcripture gives of the matter. "To the praiſe of the glory of his grace, wherein *he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*"* "And whatſoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, giving thanks to God and the Father *by* him."† "To whom coming, as unto a living ſtone, diſallowed indeed of men, but choſen of God and precious; ye alſo, as lively ſtones, are built up a ſpiritual houſe, an holy prieſthood, to offer up ſpiritual ſacrifices, *acceptable to God, by Jeſus Chriſt.*"‡ "Now the God of peace—make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is *well pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt.*"§ The reaſon of this is, that by the atonement which Chriſt has made for ſin, and out of reſpect to that, their ſins are all forgiven; they are blotted out, ſo as not to be remembered againſt them.—In this reſpect, their guilt is cancelled and done away, which otherwiſe would counterbalance, ſwallow up, and deſtroy, all their moral goodneſs. In this ſenſe, God is reconciled to them in Chriſt, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them.‖ And by reaſon of their relation to Chriſt, their moral goodneſs, in the exerciſe of which they cleave to

* Eph. i. 6. † Col. iii. 17. ‡ 1 Peter ii. 4, 5.
§ Heb. xiii. 21. ‖ 2 Cor. v. 19.

to Chriſt, and love and honour him, is more acceptable, precious and worthy in the ſight of God, than it could be in any creature not ſo united to the infinitely worthy Redeemer. Their relation to him gives them a dignity and worthineſs, which they have not in themſelves, conſidered as ſeparate from Chriſt, and renders all their holineſs more acceptable and rewardable than otherwiſe it could be. This is expreſſed by Chriſt in the following words, "He that loveth me, ſhall be loved of my Father. The Father himſelf loveth you, *becauſe ye have loved me*, and have believed that I came out from God."*

But farther to explain the doctrine of juſtification by faith in Chriſt, now under conſideration, it muſt be obſerved,

VI. MEN are brought into a juſtified ſtate by one, the firſt act of ſaving faith. The promiſe of ſalvation is made to him who believeth. "He that believeth, ſhall be ſaved; he hath eternal life, and ſhall never come into condemnation." He therefore who believes, and exerciſes one act of true faith, however imperfect and weak, comes within the reach of this promiſe, is juſtified, and ſhall be ſaved. The reaſon of it is, becauſe the firſt act of faith as really unites the ſinner to Chriſt, as many, or a courſe of acts, do; and therefore is ſufficient to render it fit and ſuitable that he ſhould have an intereſt in his merit and righteouſneſs.

It is true indeed, that in order to a perſon's continuing in a juſtified ſtate, he muſt continue united to Chriſt, and therefore muſt perſevere in his faith, in which the union, on his part conſiſts, and by which it is maintained: And in this reſpect the faith by which a man is juſtified, and obtains the promiſes of life, is a *perſevering* faith.—Though a man is pardoned and has a promiſe of eternal life,

* John xiv. 21. xvi. 27.——See Preſident Edwards, on Juſtification by Faith alone, p. 92, 93.

liſe, upon the firſt act of faith; yet this firſt act is not regarded by God, in his juſtifying him, as the only act; but it is viewed as connected with a continued ſeries of the acts of the ſame faith to the end: And the firſt act intitles to life, as the firſt, or beginning of a continued courſe of exerciſes of the ſame kind, or as a perſevering faith.

The firſt act of faith, intitles to perſeverance in faith, by virtue of a divine conſtitution and promiſe. God has promiſed that he who once believes, ſhall continue to believe, ſo that his faith ſhall not fail: That they ſhall be "kept by the power of God, through faith unto ſalvation."* If this were not the caſe, it would not be fit or congruous, that he who once believes, ſhould have the promiſe of ſalvation; and juſtification to eternal life would be ſuſpended until the believer had perſevered in faith.

In the firſt act of ſaving faith, the believer does virtually and implicitly, if not expreſsly, look to Chriſt and truſt in him for perſeverance, together with other bleſſings; and ſo it gives a title to this benefit, among others. In this view, perſeverance in faith is implied in the firſt act, and *as ſuch*, it is juſtifying faith, and has the promiſe of ſalvation. The ſcripture ſets this point in the ſame light. "Now the juſt ſhall live by faith: But if any man draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the ſaving of the ſoul."† Here, ſaving faith is repreſented as perſevering faith; and perſeverance, as being that in faith, by which it becomes ſaving; for believing to the ſaving of the ſoul, is put in oppoſition to drawing back unto perdition; and therefore muſt mean a perſevering faith.

In this view it may be ſeen why believers are daily to pray for the forgiveneſs of the ſins, which they commit after

* 1 Peter i. 5. † Heb. x. 38, 39.

after they are in a justified state; and why God is represented as actually forgiving them; and that this forgiveness is suspended upon their renewed acts of repentance and faith. The believer, upon his first believing, has the forgiveness of all his past sins, and the promise that all his future sins shall be forgiven; so that he shall never come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life: But this justification is, the whole of it, in some sense, conditional; it is granted upon the supposition that he will persevere in a course of repeated acts of faith, and that his present union to Christ will never cease, but be an everlasting union: If this should cease to exist, and this were possible, all his past sins, would be remembered against him, and he fall into condemnation, and under the curse of the law; nor could any of his sins, which he should commit in future, be forgiven. He has the promise of the forgiveness of all the sins which he shall commit, upon condition he does persevere in repentance and faith; therefore upon his renewed sinning, he renews acts of repentance and faith, and in the exercise of these, asks for pardon, and upon this he is actually forgiven, and not before, agreeable to the divine promise. But as his perseverance in faith is made sure by the promise of God, in the covenant of grace, pardon of all his sins and eternal life, are made sure to him, upon his first act of faith, and his justification.

VII. In the justification of the believer by the righteousness of Christ, it does not become his righteousness, so as that he is considered as having actually done and suffered, in his own person, what Christ did and suffered; for this is in no sense true, and cannot be made true.—But he being in Christ, united to him by faith, the righteousness of Christ, what he has done and suffered for sinners, and in their place and stead, avails for the believ-

er's juſtification, and he has as much advantage by it, in this reſpect, as if it were his own perſonal righteouſneſs. It would be needleſs to mention this particular, if ſome had not entertained this notion of the imputation of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and repreſented it in this very abſurd light; and drawn conſequences from it, moſt contrary to the truth, and many expreſs declarations of ſcripture.

VIII. IN pardoning and juſtifying the believer, his ſins are not ſo blotted out, or covered, as not to be any more ſeen or remembered. When ſins are once committed, they never can become no ſins; it will be forever true, that they were committed. Theſe facts, or the nature of them, cannot be annihilated or altered. And it is impoſſible that they ſhould be forgotten by God, or out of his ſight, while he exiſts the OMNISCIENT. And the believer's knowledge that he is juſtified, has no tendency to make him forget his ſins; but the contrary, viz. to fix them on his memory, to think much of them, confeſs them, and humble himſelf for them, and admire the grace of God in his forgiveneſs, for the ſake of Chriſt. If he could forget his ſins, he would forget that he was pardoned; for the latter ſuppoſes the former, and is founded upon it. Paul, remembered and repeatedly mentioned his ſins, and ranks himſelf among the chief of ſinners, after he knew he was pardoned, and had obtained mercy. And if he could loſe the idea of his ſin and guilt, he would have no idea of the mercy of God to him, as long as he exiſts. His ſin, in perſecuting the ſaints, and the ſins of other juſtified perſons, on ſcripture record, are ſo far from being forgotten, covered or hid, that they are publiſhed to the world, and will be eternally known and remembered. The ſcripture ſpeaks of forgiving ſin, by ſuch phraſes as theſe, Not remembering

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them any more—covering them—caſting them into the depths of the ſea, &c. Theſe are ſtrong metaphorical expreſſions, to denote that God does not, and never will ſuffer them to riſe and be brought againſt the believer, to condemn him, or do him any hurt. In this ſenſe they are annihilated, blotted out, and never ſhall be remembered any more. That theſe expreſſions cannot be underſtood in any other ſenſe, or be literally true, appears from the obſervations which have been made under this head.

IX. THE juſtification of the believer by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, does in no meaſure free him from obligation to be perfectly holy in his own perſon; but increaſes it, and his criminality in not being ſo. He is freed from the curſe of the law, for not being prefectly and perſeveringly holy, and from obligation to perfect obedience, in order to be juſtified; for he is already juſtified, without this. In this reſpect, he is not under the law, but under grace. But ſtill he is under obligation to love God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himſelf. His faith is a conformity to theſe commands, as including repentance and love, and he cannot be perfectly holy, to which he is under indiſpenſible obligation, till he comes to a perfect conformity to this law: For by this only, he can be holy, as God is holy. It is impoſſible he ſhould not be under obligation to obey this law perfectly; for it is founded in reaſon, and cannot be altered or abated; and muſt therefore, forever be the rule of the duty of creatures; and every thing in them which is contrary to this law, or a diſregard of it, is ſin. Chriſt did not come to deſtroy, or make void the law, in this reſpect; but to fulfil it: And his fulfiling or obeying it, and ſuffering the penalty of it, does not releaſe the believer from obligation to obe-

dience to it; for this is impoſſible, becauſe it would be infinitely wrong. Yet ſome have been ſo wild in their notions, and ſo abſurd and infatuated, as to ſuppoſe he has done it!

It has been obſerved, that goſpel holineſs, or the holineſs of faith, differs from legal holineſs, or the holineſs of man before he fell into ſin, and that of the angels; and the difference has been particularly ſtated in the foregoing ſection. Nevertheleſs the holineſs neceſſary to juſtification by law, or the covenant of works, and that of the believer under the covenant of grace, are of the ſame nature and kind, and conſiſt in obedience and conformity to the ſame law, in love to God, and to our neighbour: Though the latter may require exerciſes in ſome reſpects different, and towards new and different objects and truths, which could have no place or exiſtence, under the former, ſuch as ſinful man, Redemption, the character of Jeſus Chriſt, his ſufferings and works, &c.

And it is worthy of obſervation here, that the holineſs of faith, and of the redeemed, ſo far as, for the reaſon above mentioned, it differs from legal holineſs, or that under a covenant of works, has a peculiar beauty and excellence, and renders him who poſſeſſes it, more happy than he could be under a covenant of works, though perfectly holy.

The redeemed are raiſed from the dark regions of infinite guilt and wo; delivered from ſin, in which they were totally involved; and tranſlated from the power and kingdom of ſatan, into the eternal kingdom of Chriſt, to ſit down and reign with him on his throne. And this deliverance, happineſs and honour, is not from themſelves, in the leaſt degree; but from the free ſovereign grace, and wonderful love of God; and by the incarnation of the Son of God, and his taking the place of ſinners, and dying for their redemption. All this makes

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an amiable and glorious diſplay of the love and wiſdom of God, which could not have been made, had not redemption taken place. And all this new and wonderful ſcene lays a foundation for anſwerable exerciſes by the redeemed, in the deepeſt humility, in a ſenſe and acknowledgment of their unworthineſs, and abſolute dependence on free ſovereign grace for all the good, both negative and poſitive, compriſed in redemption; and in the ſweet love of benevolence, delight and gratitude, anſwerable to the divine love and holineſs manifeſted in the redemption of ſinners, and his unſpeakable love and grace to them, by which they are laid under peculiarly great, and the moſt agreeable, everlaſting obligations to gratitude and praiſe.

In theſe reſpects, and by their everlaſting, and peculiarly near and dear relation to Chriſt, and union with him, by which they are the bride, the Lamb's wife, the redeemed church will ſhine in a peculiarly beautiful holineſs, and glory, and enjoy greater happineſs and honour, than any of thoſe creatures who have not been redeemed, though perfectly holy. In this reſpect, as well as others, redemption is the *new creation*, the *new heaven and new earth*, far exceeding the firſt and old creation. In this there is a new diſplay of the divine glory; a new mode of the exerciſe of holineſs by a new kind of creatures, by putting on a form in which there is a new beauty and excellence; and a new degree of happineſs; a new and glorious character in the Redeemer, the center of union, love and holineſs, of the redeemed church; and, in one word, a new moral world, which could not have taken place, were it not for the apoſtacy of man, and redemption by Chriſt. In this ſenſe, "Old things are paſſed away, Behold, all things are become new!"

X. ON the whole, the doctrine of the juſtification of ſinners by faith in Jeſus Chriſt, appears to be not only agreeable to the ſcripture, but rational, when examined and underſtood; there being nothing abſurd or inconſiſtent in it. The law of God admits of a ſubſtitute to obey or to ſuffer for others in their room and ſtead. The firſt man was conſtituted ſuch, and he was made a type and figure of the ſecond man, who was to come, the Lord from heaven. He was able to do what the firſt man could not, even to redeem ſinners from the curſe of the law, by taking the curſe on himſelf, and ſuffering it for them, as well as obeying it perfectly; being made under the law, and putting himſelf in their place. Thus he has a righteouſneſs which anſwers the law; and therefore ſufficient for the juſtification of all thoſe in whoſe favour it can be properly applied, ſo as conſiſtently to have the benefit of it, as much as if it were their own perſonal righteouſneſs. This can be done only by the ſinner's being cordially united to him, approving of his character, and receiving and truſting in him for righteouſneſs, and redemption, which is done by *believing in him*. Therefore, "Chriſt is the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth. Even the righteouſneſs of God, which is by faith of Jeſus Chriſt, unto all, and upon all them that believe." And this righteouſneſs avails to their complete juſtification; their ſins are pardoned for the ſake of Chriſt, who is the propitiation for their ſins; he ſuffering for them, the juſt for the unjuſt, has made full atonement; and they are made heirs of eternal life, being recommended by the merit and worthineſs of Chriſt, they being in him, and one with him, as the members and head are one body.

It is agreeable to reaſon, and common ſenſe, that one perſon ſhould have favour ſhewn to him, out of reſpect to the merit and worthineſs of another, purely on the

the account of the relation the former bears to the latter, who has no worthiness of such favour in himself, and to whom it would be improper to shew such favour, were it not for his relation to such a worthy person, by which he is in some sense united to him. This is really imputing the merit of one person to another, to recommend him to favour, who has no worthiness in himself. Thus, if we have a friend who is very dear to us, and has great merit and worthiness with us, and we see a child in wretched circumstances, starving and naked; when we are informed that he is the son of our friend, we shall be disposed to shew him kindness and give him relief, feed and clothe him, for the sake of his father, out of regard to his merit in our eyes. Or, if such a worthy person, who has great merit, have a friend who loves him, though he may have no worthiness in himself, and has offended us; yet if he come recommended by this worthy friend of ours, desiring that we would forgive him, and shew him all the kindness he wants, we shall readily do it, wholly for the sake of the worthiness of our friend, though otherwise it would be proper, and we should be disposed to treat him with neglect and contempt; and this appears congruous and rational.

Much more is it so in the case before us. The Son of God, who is infinitely dear and worthy in his sight, has expressed his love to the Father, and zeal for his honour, and the honour of his law and government, and hatred of all sin against him, by putting himself in the place of sinners under the law; and has borne the curse of it himself in the sinner's stead, and obeyed it perfectly; hereby manifesting his love to sinful man, and desire of their salvation, if consistent with the honour of God, and his law; and that he might make it so, for all those who believe in him, has done and suffered all this, and in this way has exerted himself to the utmost, that

they may be pardoned and ſaved, and God honoured thereby: That God may be juſt, and the juſtifier of him that believeth in him. And in all this, in which he has exerciſed and expreſſed his love of righteouſneſs, and hatred of iniquity, in the beſt manner, and to the higheſt degree poſſible, he has merited infinitely with the Father; he is well pleaſed for his righteouſneſs ſake, and is ready to give him whatever he aſks; eſpecially that, for the ſake of which, he has gone through all this labour and ſuffering. He aſks that he would pardon and ſave every guilty ſinner, who unites himſelf to him by believing on him, who ſhall love, receive, and truſt in him, that his righteouſneſs may be imputed to him, and that for his ſake he will juſtify and ſave all ſuch, whom he loves, and for whom he has done and ſuffered ſo much.* The Father is ſo well pleaſed with his righteouſneſs, and he is ſo infinitely dear, honourable and meritorious in his ſight, that he is ready to ſhew all needed favour to thoſe who love his Son, and believe on him, for his ſake, and purely out of reſpect to his ſuffering and merit, to juſtify them, and give them eternal life, though they be in themſelves infinitely unworthy and illdeſerving. Thus the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is imputed to all them who believe for their juſtification. And who can ſhew that there is any thing unreaſonable or contrary to the truth in this procedure? Who will ſay it is not perfectly reaſonable and proper?

* See John xvii.

IMPROVEMENT.

IMPROVEMENT.

THE ſubject of this ſection leads us to ſee, and reflect upon the wonderful diſplay of infinite wiſdom in the ſalvation of man, by Jeſus Chriſt.

It has been obſerved, that wiſdom is a moral excellence; it is a moral perfection of God. It is included in benevolence or goodneſs, and cannot be ſeparated from it. Where there is no benevolence there is no wiſdom, and where there is no wiſdom, there is no benevolence. And there is always, and in all inſtances, as much wiſdom as there is goodneſs, and vice verſa. Yet it is proper and neceſſary to diſtinguiſh between theſe, in order to think and ſpeak moſt clearly of the perfection of God. And this is done in the ſcripture. The goodneſs of God is a *wiſe* goodneſs, is exerciſed in the wiſeſt and beſt manner, to anſwer the beſt ends. God is as wiſe as he is good.

There is a moſt bright and glorious diſplay of the wiſdom of God in the redemption of man. Therefore, the goſpel of the grace of God is called *wiſdom*, the *wiſdom of God*: And Chriſt is called ſo: And the Apoſtle Paul, ſpeaking of the redemption of man, has the following remarkable expreſſion. "According to the RICHES OF HIS GRACE, wherein he hath abounded towards us, in ALL WISDOM AND PRUDENCE."* And he ſays, the angels learn the manifold wiſdom of God, in the redemption of his church by Jeſus Chriſt. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known *by the church* the manifold wiſdom of God, according to the eternal purpoſe which he purpoſed in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord."†

In order to lay the beſt and moſt ample foundation, and give opportunity and occaſion for the greateſt and moſt

* Eph. i. 8. † Chap. iii. 10, 11.

moſt glorious exerciſe and manifeſtation of the love and grace of God, it has been wiſely ordered that there ſhould be creatures in a ſtate of infinite guilt and wretchedneſs, from which they could not be delivered conſiſtent with the honour of the divine law, and the moral character and government of God, unleſs a divine perſon, the Son of God, became a man, and took upon him the form of a ſervant, putting himſelf under the law, and taking the ſinner's place, ſo as to bear the curſe in his ſtead, and die an ignominious, cruel and accurſed death for him: And having thus ſuffered, and obeyed the law of God in the moſt trying circumſtances, he is become the author of eternal ſalvation to all them who obey him. And in this way of ſalvation by Chriſt, there is no room for mere human righteouſneſs and worthineſs to come into the account. The righteouſneſs by which man is accepted and juſtified, is a *divine* righteouſneſs, the righteouſneſs of God: A righteouſneſs of which not a mere creature is the author; and the worth of it ariſes from the dignity of the divine nature, and not from any worthineſs of a mere creature. In this way man is emptied of all worthineſs in himſelf, and greatly humbled, and brought into a ſtate of exceeding, peculiar dependence on God; and divine grace is exalted and honoured, while the believer receives from him "Abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteouſneſs."*

And the redeemed are intereſted in this divine righteouſneſs, not out of regard to any worthineſs of their own; but when they are juſtified, they are conſidered in themſelves, infinitely unworthy; and that by which they are united to this divine perſon, ſo as to have the advantage of his merit, the bond of union on their part, conſiſts in an exerciſe of ſoul in which they diſcern and acknowledge that they are infinitely guilty, illdeſerving, hateful creatures; that were there not an infinitely meritorious righteouſneſs

* Eph. v. 17.

righteousness in Christ, it would not be proper or consistent with the law and the perfection of God, that they should be pardoned and saved; and that the righteousness by which they are justified, is that of a divine person, the righteousness of God. They therefore, ascribe every good they receive, every thing better than endless destruction, to the free, sovereign grace of God, and give him all the glory of it. This is "to be justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ: And it is of faith, that it might be by grace."* "By grace are ye saved, through faith." And the Apostle adds, "And that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."† This leads to observe, that the faith by which men are united to Christ, is the free, sovereign gift of God, in renewing their hearts, and forming them to such an exercise; in which he acts as an absolute sovreign, and has mercy on whom he will have mercy.

Every thing is so ordered in the work of redemption, as to give the greatest occasion, and advantage, and the best opportunity for the exercise of the infinite goodness and grace of God; and in such a manner as to make it most visible to creatures: And the redeemed are put under the best advantage to see it in the extent and glory of it, and be properly affected with it. The emptiness and nothingness of the creature, his infinite dependence on God, the fountain of being and all good; the infinite sufficiency for the creature, even for infinitely guilty and wretched creatures, and his free, sovereign, unbounded love and grace, are here set in the most advantageous and striking light, especially to the redeemed; so that in the final issue of things, when redemption is perfected, God will appear in the clearest light possible, to be ALL IN ALL.‡ And they will receive unspeakably greater good, than they could have wanted, or were capable of, had they not sinned, and had there been no divine Mediator

* Rom. iii. 24. iv. 16. † Eph. ii. 8. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 28.

diator and righteouſneſs. And all "To the praiſe of the glory of his grace."*

Now the wiſdom of God has contrived and laid the plan for all this. Therefore it is manifeſted, and glorified in this exerciſe and diſplay of divine grace, in which God hath *abounded in all wiſdom and prudence.* Here the wiſdom of God is ſet in the moſt conſpicuous, pleaſing light, which draws the attention, raiſes the admiration, influences the love, and exalts the praiſe of Angels. And all who underſtand the goſpel will cordially join with them, and with St. Paul, in his rapture and doxology. "O the depth of the riches, both of the *wiſdom* and the knowledge of God! Now unto the King eternal, immortal, inviſible, THE ONLY WISE GOD, be honour and glory forever and ever, Amen."†

II. IN the view of this ſubject, we ſee how, and in what reſpects, the law is eſtabliſhed in the juſtification of ſinners by faith in Chriſt.

The Apoſtle Paul ſays, the law is eſtabliſhed in this way. "Do we then make void the law through faith? Yea, we eſtabliſh the law."‡ And when we conſider what ſaving faith is, and how the ſinner is juſtified by faith, we may ſee on what ground this is aſſerted.

The whole work of the Redeemer in his incarnation, obedience and ſufferings, had reference to the law, in order to eſtabliſh that, and magnify it, and make it honourable, conſiſtent with the pardon and ſalvation of the ſinner who believeth in Jeſus. He was made under the law with this view, in order to ſuffer the curſe of it, and obey it in the room of ſinners, as their ſubſtitute and ſurety, and in this way obtain the righteouſneſs of the law, for them, that he might be "the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth."

That

* Eph. i. 6. † Rom. xi. 33. 1 Tim. i. 17. ‡ Rom. iii. 31.

That the law might be maintained and eſtabliſhed by vicarious obedience or ſuffering, or by a ſubſtitute, was made known when man was firſt created, as has been ſhewn. The firſt ſubſtitute or public head, failed of obedience, and introduced ſin and condemnation, which by divine conſtitution extended to all his poſterity. All mankind are by the diſobedience of the firſt man, conſtituted ſinners, and by ſinning are under the curſe of the law; from which they cannot be delivered, without aboliſhing the law, unleſs it be ſuffered by them, or a ſubſtitute. They could not ſuffer this curſe and ſurvive it; for the evil implied in it, and which they deſerved, is infinite. And for the ſame reaſon, no mere creature, in heaven or earth, could be a ſubſtitute, to ſuffer it in their room. But the laſt Adam, the ſecond man, who is the Lord from heaven, is able to take the curſe on himſelf and ſuffer it, and yet ſurvive; and having by this made full atonement for ſin, and ſatisfied the threatning of the law; and by his obedience done all that is required of man, in order to his juſtification, he has introduced a complete and everlaſting righteouſneſs; ſo that he to whom it may be properly imputed, and he have the advantage of it, as much as if it were his own perſonal righteouſneſs, and he ſtood perfectly right in the ſight of the law, may be juſtified, perfectly conſiſtent with the law; and the law be more eſtabliſhed, reſpected and honoured, by the divine righteouſneſs of the Mediator, than it would have been by the eternal ſufferings of every tranſgreſſor, and the obedience of all creatures.

But no man can be juſtified by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, unleſs he unite himſelf to him by faith in him; in which he is brought to ſee and heartily acknowledge the law which curſes every tranſgreſſor of it, to be holy, juſt and good, and that he may be juſtly deſtroyed forever for his ſin, and if he be pardoned and ſaved, it muſt be wholly by free, undeſerved ſovereign grace to him,

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while he receives this favour purely on the account of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt. And he highly approves of it, and is greatly pleaſed that the Mediator has done and ſuffered ſo much to eſtabliſh and honour the law, ſo as to become the end of the law for righteouſneſs, to him who believeth, and truſts in him, in the character of "The Lord our righteouſneſs."* Thus the believer is a friend to the law of God, and does not wiſh to be ſaved in any way inconſiſtent with it. And by faith he is conformed to it, in the requirement of it, in a meaſure, and it is written on his heart. And he feels himſelf under indiſpenſible obligation to perfect obedience to the law, as an unerring, excellent and perfect rule, and acknowledges that every thing in him, contrary to this law, and that does not come up to all that it requires, is inexcuſable wickedneſs. And he looks to Chriſt and truſts in him, to bring him to a perfect conformity to the law of God, as without that he cannot be completely happy, and in which, in a great meaſure, his ſalvation conſiſts. At the ſame time he is watching and fighting againſt ſin and ſatan, and preſſing forward after perfect holineſs, working out his own ſalvation with fear and trembling.

Thus the law, both in the precepts and threatnings of it, is every way regarded, maintained and eſtabliſhed, in the juſtification of ſinners by faith in Chriſt, and is much more honoured than it could have been, had there been no Redeemer, and all tranſgreſſors of the law had periſhed, or had it never been trangreſſed.

* Jer. xxiii. 6.

SECTION

SECTION VIII.

On the Covenant of Grace.

THE Covenant of Grace, when underſtood in the moſt extenſive ſenſe, comprehends all the deſigns and tranſactions reſpecting the redemption of man by Jeſus Chriſt, in oppoſition to the covenant of works, or law of works, under which, man was firſt made; and is the ſame with the goſpel, conſidered in its original, and the form in which it is adminiſtered, and the effects of it.—In this view, it comprehends the eternal purpoſe of God the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, to redeem man, fixing the manner of it, and every thing that relates to it, and entering into a mutual agreement or covenant; in which the part which each Perſon ſhould perform, as diſtinguiſhed from the other, was fixed, and voluntarily undertaken. The Father is repreſented in ſcripture, as firſt in this great affair, as giving and ſending the Son, to redeem man; and determining the number and the individuals of the human race to be redeemed, and giving them to the Son, to redeem them, and promiſing that he ſhould be upheld in this work, and carried through it, and be ſatisfied in his reward, and the ſalvation of thoſe who were given to him. The Son agreed to all this, and undertook the part he was to act, ſaying, "Lo I come: I delight to do thy will, O my God." The Holy Spirit undertakes to do the great part aſſigned to him in this work, particularly as the agent by whom the application of redemption is made to the elect, by ſanctifying them, and effecting a union between the Redeemer and them; and by dwelling in them, forever,

as

as the ſpirit of love and holineſs. But this covenant tranſaction is more particularly and often mentioned, as taking place between the Father and the Son; though not excluding the Holy Spirit.

It is needleſs to recite the numerous paſſages of ſcripture which repreſent the matter in this light, and refer to this covenant, to him who is acquainted with his Bible. That ſuch a covenant muſt take place between the Perſons of the adorable Trinity, is certain from the divine decrees; and neceſſarily implied in this one ſentence of the Apoſtle James, "Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world."* This covenant may be conſidered as including the whole of redemption of man, as every thing relating to it is hereby fixed, and they who are to be redeemed, have redemption ſecured to them; and the Mediator covenanted as the public head of his people, and their ſalvation was made ſure; and in this reſpect, they are all included in this covenant. And this may be called a covenant of grace, as it is the effect and expreſſion of ſovereign love and grace, and is the foundation of all the favour and free grace which is to be given to the redeemed church to eternity, and comprehends it all.

But there is a covenant tranſaction, which takes place between God in Chriſt, and every believer, when the goſpel is cordially embraced. This is often mentioned in ſcripture, and God is ſaid to enter into covenant with men, and believers are ſaid to be in covenant; and to make a covenant with him, and enter into covenant; and lay hold of God's covenant, &c. This is a covenant diſtinct and different from that which has been mentioned between the Perſons in the Trinity, or more expreſsly, between the Father and the Son; though this eternal covenant comprehends that made in time with believers, in the manner which has been mentioned. This diſtinction

* Acts xv. 18.

tinction therefore, muſt be made, and kept in view, would we think and ſpeak clearly and intelligibly on this ſubject. They who have been ſenſible of this, have diſtinguiſhed them by different names, calling the firſt, *the covenant of redemption*, and the laſt, *the covenant of grace*, without deſigning hereby, to exclude grace from the former, or to conſider it as not comprehending the latter, in the ſenſe above explained. But the difference conſiſts partly in the different parties covenanting; the former is between the divine perſons of the Godhead, or the Father and the Son; the latter between theſe divine perſons, or God in Chriſt, and ſinful man: Partly, in the different promiſes and mutual engagements between the parties covenanting.

This may be illuſtrated in ſome meaſure, perhaps, by the following inſtance. The ſon of a great king, and the king himſelf, had compaſſion on a poor wretched woman, who had been guilty of a capital crime, and was condemned to be put to death; and deviſed means to ſave her, and bring her to the honour and happineſs of being the wife of the ſon. In order to this, and to make it conſiſtent with the laws of the kingdom, and the honour of the father and ſon, the latter muſt go through a ſcene of ſuffering and diſgrace. The ſon willingly undertook this; and the father engaged to give him all the neceſſary aſſiſtance and ſupport through the whole: And in conſequence of his doing this, and as a proper reward for his virtue, to give him a place on his throne, and to cauſe the woman to conſent to be his wife, though ſhe was now a great enemy to him; and to grant to her a free pardon, and that the ſon ſhould make her as rich, honourable and happy as he deſired; taking her into the neareſt relation and union to himſelf. This agreement and covenant being made between the father and the ſon, the latter went through all the ſuffering and diſgrace,

which he had promiſed to do, and was received to the power and honour which the father had promiſed.

The ſon being inveſted with authority and power to reclaim the woman, and bring her to conſent to marry him, applied to her, and let her know all that had been done by him, in order to her being pardoned, and received to the greateſt honour and happineſs, upon her conſenting to be his wife; and offered himſelf to her to be her friend and huſband, and do all for her, which ſhe could want or deſire, *if ſhe would conſent to be his wife*; and give herſelf up to him to be thus related and united to him. The woman freely conſented to the propoſal of the prince, and accepted of his kind offer; and relying on his faithfulneſs and goodneſs, engaged to do the duty of a wife to him. Thus a particular covenant was made and took place between them, by their mutual promiſes to each other.

When Chriſt, the Mediator, had finiſhed the part aſſigned to him, and which he had engaged in the covenant of redemption, in taking upon him the form of a ſervant, and becoming obedient unto death, he was raiſed from the dead, and exalted to the throne of the univerſe, and made head over all things to the church, as a reward for the great work which he had finiſhed by his obedience and ſufferings, by which he was openly approved and juſtified, as Mediator between God and man; and power was given unto him over all fleſh, that he ſhould give eternal life to as many as were given to him by the Father.*

And he has ordered the goſpel to be preached to men, declaring his character, works and deſigns, and publiſhing the way of ſalvation by him, and freely offering it to all who will accept of it, and promiſing that all who believe on him, giving themſelves to him to be his diſciples and ſervants, ſhall be ſaved. This is the ſum of the covenant of

* John xvii. 2.

of grace, as it is publiſhed and preached in the goſpel of the grace of God: And every one who embraces it, enters into this covenant; for this is the only condition on man's part; and by this, men are intitled to all the promiſes of the covenant, and ſalvation is made ſure to them.

The following things may be obſerved, concerning this covenant:

1. All the promiſed bleſſings and good things contained in this covenant, are made ſure to the believer on his firſt believing, and entering into covenant; becauſe one of the promiſes of this covenant, as propoſed to men by God, is, that he who once believes and accepts of the offer made, ſhall perſevere in his adherence to it, and never fall from it, ſo as to fail of the bleſſings of it. It is in this reſpect an *everlaſting* covenant, as it inſures everlaſting life, and can never fail, or be broken, by either party in covenant. This is the covenant deſcribed in the following words, "And I will make an *everlaſting* covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, *that they ſhall not depart from me.*"* This is the covenant of which David ſpeaks, as compriſing the whole of his ſalvation, and all his deſire.† The tenor of the covenant of grace is ſtated as follows: "This is the covenant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: And I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a people. And they ſhall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, ſaying, Know the Lord; for all ſhall know me, from the leaſt to the greateſt. For I will be merciful to their unrighteouſneſs, and their ſins and their iniquities will I remember no more."‡

2. This

* Jer. xxxii. 40. † 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. ‡ Heb. viii. 10, 11, 12.

2. This covenant is called in ſcripture, a *new* and ſecond covenant, in diſtinction from another and foregoing covenant.

The covenant between God the Father, and the ſecond perſon of the Trinity, is a new and ſecond covenant. The firſt covenant was between God, and the firſt Adam, as repreſenting all mankind, as their public head. That between God, and the laſt Adam, the Redeemer of men, the ſecond public head, is a ſecond covenant and a *new* one. And this lays the foundation of the covenant between God and man, of which we are now ſpeaking, and really implies it, as has been obſerved.

But this covenant, between God the Redeemer, and thoſe who believe in him, is expreſsly called a *new* covenant, as it is a covenant of grace, and herein diſtinguiſhed from the covenant of works, under which all mankind were, antecedent to redemption by Chriſt: And which was brought into view, and kept moſt in ſight under the Moſaic diſpenſation. The covenant made with the children of Iſrael was in the form of a covenant of works. The law of works was exhibited firſt, and brought moſt clearly into ſight, that it might be known to be what it really is: And the covenant of grace, or the goſpel, though revealed, and contained in that covenant, was not ſet in open light, but covered, and in a meaſure hid under the types and ſhadows of that covenant; and under the form of a covenant of works, as the nucleus or kernel is covered and hid with the huſk or ſhell that ſurrounds it: So that they who were not ſpiritual, diſcerning and attentive, ſaw only the outſide, and conſidered it as wholly a covenant of works; and hoped for juſtification by it, in that view. It is certain this was the caſe with the nation of the Jews in general, in the Apoſtles days. They ſought righteouſneſs and juſtification, as it were, by the works of the law. They were ignorant of God's righteouſneſs,

teouſneſs, and attempted to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, the righteouſneſs of the law.* This form of a covenant of works, is repreſented by the vail which Moſes put over his face, when ſpeaking to the people. "So that the children of Iſrael could not ſtedfaſtly look to the end of that which was to be aboliſhed: But their minds were blinded: For even to the days of the Apoſtles, the ſame vail remained in the reading of the Old Teſtament (or the old covenant) but even to that day, when Moſes was read, the vail was upon their heart."† In this view of it, and conſidered as exhibiting the covenant of works, St. Paul calls, the giving the law from Mount Sinai, and that diſpenſation, "The miniſtration of death and condemnation, written and engraven on ſtones."‡ It is therefore ſaid, "The law was given by Moſes; but grace and truth came by Jeſus Chriſt,"§ The diſpenſation under Moſes was a legal diſpenſation, exhibiting law, in the form of a covenant of works: One particular, and perhaps the principal deſign of it, was to reveal the divine law, in the ſtrictneſs, extent and glory of it; as neceſſary to prepare for the clear and open manifeſtation of the covenant of grace; which was then in a great meaſure hid, and more obſcurely revealed under ſhadows and types, and in other ways; ſo that the whole was but a *ſhadow* of the good things of the covenant of grace.‖

Therefore, the revelation made by Moſes, is called *the law*: And the covenant into which the children of Iſrael entered, is repreſented as a legal covenant, a covenant of works, to which the covenant of grace is oppoſed, as another, and a new covenant. A few quotations from ſcripture, out of many that might be mentioned, will aſcertain this. "But now he (Jeſus) hath obtained a more excellent miniſtry (than the high Prieſts under the law of Moſes) by how much alſo he is the Mediator of a *bet-*

* Rom. ix. 32. x. 3. † 2 Cor. iii. 13, 14, 15.
‡ 2 Cor. iii. 7, 9. § John i. 17. ‖ Heb. x. 1.

ter covenant, which was eſtabliſhed upon better promiſes. For if that firſt covenant had been faultleſs, then ſhould no place have been ſought for the *ſecond*. For finding fault with them, he ſaith, Behold the days come, ſaith the Lord, when I will make a *new covenant* with the houſe of Iſrael, and with the houſe of Judah: Not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; becauſe they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, ſaith the Lord."* Therefore the goſpel is called the *New Teſtament*, and the Moſaic diſpenſation is called the *Old Teſtament*.† "Who hath made us able Miniſters of the *New Teſtament*. For until this day, remaineth the ſame vail untaken away, in reading the *Old Teſtament*, which vail is done away in Chriſt."‡

3. The covenant of grace has been revealed to man, and has been adminiſtered in different forms, and by various methods, ever ſince the firſt intimation of mercy to ſinners, made ſoon after the firſt apoſtacy; and by it all true believers have been ſaved from that time to this; and none have been ſaved in any other way; nor will any be ſaved in any other way but this, to the end of the world. And in this reſpect it is an everlaſting covenant. This covenant was made known to Adam, and was adminiſtered, to the ſalvation of all the truly pious from Adam to Noah, and from Noah to Abraham, and from him to Moſes. And nothing but the wickedneſs of man, and his oppoſition to the things contained and implied in this covenant, has prevented the publication of it to every one of the human race, and their ſalvation by it. And from Moſes to the coming of Chriſt, the covenant of grace was made known and adminiſtered; and the goſpel was preached to the children of Iſrael, through all that time, and

* Heb. viii. 6, 7, 8, 9.

† The ſame word, in the original, is tranſlated *teſtament* and *covenant*.

‡ 2 Cor. iii. 6, 14.

and all the pious were ſaved by it, though it was covered under the form of a covenant of works, as has been obſerved and explained.

The law, as a covenant of works, was not exhibited in the revelation made to the children of Iſrael by Moſes, as it has been now explained, under the notion that any man could obtain the favour of God, and be ſaved by this law or covenant; for this was impoſſible. But this law was thus revealed and added, that it might be known what the law was, and that men might be hereby convinced, that no man can be juſtified by the works of the law, as by his ſins he is under the curſe of it; and that, under this conviction, and deſpairing of ſalvation by the covenant of works, they might be led to underſtand and embrace the covenant of grace, the way of ſalvation by faith in the Redeemer. This is the light in which this point is ſet by the Apoſtle Paul. "Is the law then againſt the promiſes of God? God forbid. For if there had been a law which could have given life, verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the law. But the ſcripture hath concluded all under ſin, that the promiſe by faith of Jeſus Chriſt might be given to them that believe."* This was the end which the revelation of this law anſwered, to thoſe who were ſaved under that diſpenſation; and it is ſuited and deſigned to anſwer this ſame end to thoſe who ſhall be ſaved, to the end of the world: For by the law, thus revealed, is the knowledge of ſin, and the curſe of God, under which all men are, who do not believe in Chriſt. Thus St. Paul ſtates the matter, with regard to himſelf. "I had not known ſin but by the law; for I had not known luſt, except the law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet: For without the law ſin was dead. I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, ſin revived, and I died."†

* Gal. iii. 21, 22. † Rom. vii. 7, 8, 9.

Though the Redeemer had not actually performed and gone through what he had undertaken to do and ſuffer; yet it being engaged and made certain, all believers who lived before his incarnation, were ſaved by virtue of his ſufferings and obedience, which were certain to take place, in due time.

4. The difference and oppoſition between the covenant of works and the new covenant, the covenant of grace, has been particularly ſtated in the two preceding ſections. The former requires perfect obedience, as the condition of life, as the price to recommend to the favour of God, which is the righteouſneſs of the law of works. The latter conſiſts in a teſtimony and promiſe on God's part, requiring nothing of man, but that belief of this teſtimony and promiſe, which implies a cordial reception of the good things, exhibited and offered in this covenant, without offering any thing as the price of them; but receiving them as a free gift to a ſinner, infinitely guilty and wretched. The condition of the firſt is out of the reach of man. It is impoſſible he ſhould obtain righteouſneſs by it, becauſe he is a ſinner. The laſt is poſſible to all, and ſaves every one who believeth.

The Apoſtle Paul ſtates the difference and oppoſition between theſe two covenants, from the writings of Moſes, which proves that both theſe covenants were revealed in that diſpenſation. His words are theſe: "Moſes deſcribeth the righteouſneſs which is of the law, that the man which doth thoſe things, ſhall live by them.* But the righteouſneſs which is of faith, ſpeaketh on this wiſe: Say not in thine heart, Who ſhall aſcend into heaven? (that is, to bring Chriſt down) or who ſhall deſcend into the deep? (that is, to bring Chriſt again from the dead) But what ſaith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart.† That is, the word of faith which we preach, that if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth,

* See Levit. xviii. 5. † See Deut. xxx. 11, 12, 13, 14.

mouth, the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe in thine heart that God raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved."*

5. In the preaching of the goſpel, the covenant of grace is propoſed, and the bleſſings it contains are offered to all to whom it comes, upon their believing, and heartily approving the way of ſalvation therein propoſed. For all who thus comply, come up to the condition of the covenant, on their part, and conſequently are intereſted in all the promiſes of it.

The atonement and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, is ſufficient for the juſtification and ſalvation of all them who believe, be they ever ſo many, even all the human race. Therefore, the offer of ſalvation is made to all, without exception, and promiſed to all who believe, or willingly embrace the offer, to which they are invited and commanded. The direction and command is to preach the goſpel to all nations, to every creature. But this cannot be done if the bleſſings of the covenant of grace be not offered to all, even pardon, juſtification and ſalvation, who are willing to receive them. For it is no goſpel, no good news, to thoſe to whom this offer and invitation cannot be made. The goſpel cannot be preached to the devils, becauſe the offer of ſalvation cannot be made to them, on any condition whatſoever: And if there be any of mankind to whom this offer may not be made, the goſpel can no more be preached to them, than to the fallen angels.

The goſpel may be preached, and all the bleſſings of the covenant of grace be offered to thoſe who are not willing to accept of the offer, and never will believe the report, and be ſaved. It is contrary to all reaſon and common ſenſe, to ſay, that no good thing can be offered to him who is not, and never can be perſuaded to be willing to accept it; that his rejecting the thing offered, renders it no offer to him, and annihilates the good

* Rom. x. 5—9.

good will and kindneſs of him who made the offer:—Therefore, that there can be no goodneſs manifeſted or exerciſed, in making an offer of the greateſt good, to him who does not receive it; and there is really nothing offered. But all this is implied in ſaying, that ſalvation by Chriſt cannot be offered to thoſe who by rejecting him, ſhall not be ſaved, but periſh forever.

It is known to God, that ſome to whom the goſpel is preached, and ſalvation by Chriſt offered, will reject it, and who they are who will do ſo, and conſequently fail of ſalvation. But if their refuſing the offer, be conſiſtent with their having it really made to them; then the knowledge that they will refuſe to accept it, cannot render the offer leſs real and ſincere.

But that the bleſſings of the covenant of grace are offered to all, without exception; and all to whom the goſpel comes, are invited and commanded to repent and believe, is as evident and certain a truth, as any contained in the Bible. When Chriſt ſent his diſciples to preach, he directed them to ſay to all, "*Repent*, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." "And they went out and preached, that men ſhould repent."* And they offered peace and ſalvation to every perſon in the houſes, into which they entered.† And Chriſt himſelf "preached the goſpel of the kingdom of God, ſaying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. *Repent ye, and believe the goſpel.*‡ And "Now God commandeth *all men, every where* to repent."§ That is, to comply with the condition of the covenant of grace, and be ſaved: For, as has been ſhown, repentance is put for the whole of converſion, and implies faith, and is connected with pardon and ſalvation. Chriſt ſays, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him."¶ None can *reject* him, to whom he is not offered. Therefore

* Mark vi. 12. † Luke x. 5.
‡ Mark i. 14, 15. § Acts xvii. 30. ¶ John xii. 48.

fore he, with all his benefits, is offered to all who hear the gospel. The Apostle Paul, offered salvation to all who were present and heard him preach in a synagogue of the Jews, "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, (that is, all who are not of the stock of Abraham, but proselytes from other nations) *to you* is the word of this salvation sent."* And when the Jews contradicted him, and blasphemed, He and Barnabas said to them, "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: But seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."† But to quote any more of this kind, is needless: And not so much would have been offered on this head, were it not that there are some who think that salvation by Christ cannot be offered to any but to those who are elected, and shall believe, and be saved. And as no man can know who they are, so as certainly to distinguish them from others, salvation cannot be offered to any, on any condition or terms whatever. How contrary this notion is both to the scripture, and to reason, and how inconsistent with preaching the gospel to any, will appear from the observations which have been now made.

IMPROVEMENT.

HOW great is the privilege, which all enjoy, who live under the gospel! Salvation is sent unto them, and laid at their feet, and Christ is waiting for their acceptance, standing at the door, and knocking for admittance.—How amazing, how inconceivably great is their folly, madness and guilt, who reject this most benevolent counsel of God against themselves, and perish by slighting this offer, and despising the Redeemer!

How

* Acts xiii. 26. † verse 46.

How ſafe and happy are they who lay hold of this covenant of grace! By infinite wiſdom it is formed and ſuited to the ſtate and circumſtances of man, and contains every thing he can want to eternity. They may eſpouſe the language of St. Paul, "God hath ſaved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpoſe and grace, which was given us in Chriſt Jeſus, before the world began."* "Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? Neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord."†

* 2 Tim. i. 9. † Romans viii. 35, 38, 39.

SECTION IX.

The Manner of the Diſpenſation of the Covenant of Grace, and the Preaching of the Goſpel.

IN the concluſion of the preceding ſection, it has been obſerved and ſhown, that the covenant of grace, is to be exhibited and propoſed to all men; and that the bleſſings contained in it, to thoſe who comply with it, are to be freely offered to all to whom the goſpel is preached; which Jeſus Chriſt has commanded to be preached to all nations, to every creature, that is, to all mankind. It is now more particularly to be conſidered, how this is to be done, and what is implied in preaching the goſpel.

This

This ſubject may be ſtated, and illuſtrated under the following particulars.

I. PREACHING the goſpel, implies a declaration of the whole ſyſtem of truth and duty, contained in divine revelation; as all theſe are implied in the goſpel, and have relation to the covenant of grace. Though ſome truths are more eſſential and important than others, and the goſpel may be ſaid to be preached, while ſome are overlooked; yet it cannot be *fully* preached, unleſs the whole are brought into view; and muſt be in a degree defective, by oppoſing and rejecting any revealed truth. Therefore, to preach the goſpel, is to *declare all the counſel of God*, as the Apoſtle Paul did.* Every doctrine revealed in the Bible, and every duty preſcribed, has a connection with the whole; and all make but one conſiſtent ſyſtem. The whole may be ſummed up and epitomized, in a more general and comprehenſive way, by expreſsly mentioning only the leading and moſt eſſential truths contained in the goſpel, while others, though not mentioned, are implied; and every particular truth, and branch of duty, may be more particularly brought into view, and explained, as there is occaſion, and opportunity offers; in which the longeſt life may be ſpent in teaching, and making advances in learning, and the knowledge of the truth.

Some of the moſt eſſential truths implied in the covenant of grace, or the goſpel, have been brought into view in the foregoing part of this work, and others are yet to be conſidered, in their order and connection, together with the duties which are included and enjoined. It appears from what has been ſaid in the preceding chapters, eſpecially in that on the nature of ſaving faith, that there is ſuch order and connection in revealed truth, and ſuch dependence of one on another, that ſome things muſt firſt be taught, underſtood and believed, before others can be brought

* Acts xx. 27.

brought into view, ſo as to appear in their true light.—This may be illuſtrated by the following inſtances, ſome of which have been already mentioned.

The being of God, his attributes and perfections, in which the divine character conſiſts, muſt firſt be underſtood and believed; as this is the foundation of all religious truth, ſo that every other revealed doctrine depends wholly upon it. Conſequently, a groſs miſtake reſpecting the character of the Deity, will lead to error through the whole ſyſtem of theology, and pervert the goſpel. This knowledge of God is neceſſary, in order to know what is the nature of his moral government, and the reaſon and extent of his law, and the obligation under which men are to obey it. And a right conception of the moral government and law of God, is neceſſary, in order to know what is the moral character and ſtate of man, viz. wholly depraved and ſinful, under the curſe and diſpleaſure of God, infinitely guilty and wretched, according to the ſentence of a moſt righteous and good law. All this muſt be exhibited, underſtood and believed, before redemption by Chriſt can be underſtood, or come into view. Thoſe truths are therefore implied in the goſpel, and the covenant of grace; and the goſpel cannot be preached without exhibiting them in a true and proper light. In the light of theſe truths, the way is prepared to diſcover, and ſet before men, the deſign and work of redemption; the perſon, character, deſign and work of the Redeemer, and the grace and ſalvation opened in the goſpel; and to ſhow what is neceſſary, in order to be ſaved by Chriſt, and in what this ſalvation conſiſts; and what are the duties, and promiſes, and threatnings, which are revealed in the Bible.

II. THE publiſhing of the covenant of grace, and preaching the goſpel, does not diſannul the law of God, or diſcharge men from duty and obedience; but requires

quires and demands obedience of all to whom it is preached.

The law is not in the leaſt abated in the extent and ſtrictneſs of the precepts of it, by the goſpel. The obedience of Chriſt does not diſcharge any man, even thoſe who believe in him, from perfect obedience to the law of God; or free them in the leaſt degree, from their obligations to be perfectly holy. "Chriſt is the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth:" So that he may be delivered from the curſe of the law, be pardoned and juſtified, conſiſtent with the law, though he has no perſonal righteouſneſs and obedience, which anſwers the demands of it. But this does not remove his ill deſert in any degree, or take away, or leſſen, his obligation to obey the law perfectly: And it remains as much the meaſure and rule of duty to him, as ever it was. And he is no farther holy, or does any duty, than he conforms to the law of God, and obeys it, requiring him to love God with all his heart, ſoul and ſtrength, and his neighbour as himſelf. Thus the preaching of the goſpel does not make void the law; but eſtabliſhes it.*

In this view, the law muſt be exhibited in preaching the goſpel, not only as neceſſary to ſhow the ſinner his ſtate and character, and to lead him to underſtand the goſpel, and to ſee his need of Chriſt, that he may be ſaved by free grace; but to ſet before him what is, and ever will be his duty, and the rule and meaſure of his obedience; and that it may be known that the goſpel does not abate his obligation to perfect obedience: But when underſtood in the full extent of it, carries this demand in it, and increaſes the obligation of believers to be perfectly holy; and cannot propoſe any other or lower rule of duty.

The goſpel does indeed introduce new objects, and propoſes and enjoins duties, which could have no exiſtence, had there been no redemption for man. But theſe duties,

* Rom. iii. 31.

duties, which ariſe from a diſpenſation of the covenant of grace, cannot be neglected without diſobedience to the original law of God; which muſt be conſidered as independent of the goſpel, and antecedent to the apoſtacy of man. For the law which requires man to love God with all his heart, binds him to comply with every inſtitution, propoſal or offer, which God ſhall make to him; and to obey every command, which he ſhall reveal, be it what it may: And not to comply with ſuch inſtitution, or not to accept of any propoſal or offer he ſhall make; and to diſobey any command of God, is diſobedience to that law. Conſequently, ſuch inſtitutions, commands, or offers of pardon and ſalvation, do not diſannul or abate the law, but the contrary.

Though the goſpel conſiſts moſt eſſentially in the free offer of mercy, on condition of a cordial acceptance; yet it neceſſarily implies and carries in this offer, an obligation and command to accept the offer; which acceptance, taken in its full extent, implies and conſiſts in a perfect conformity to the law of God; and every degree of compliance with the goſpel, is an equal degree of real holineſs, or obedience to the divine law, as has been ſhown in the ſection on the nature of ſaving faith. Though obedience to the goſpel, or compliance with it, and acceptance of the ſalvation which it offers, be a different form and manner of the exerciſe of holineſs, which is, ſo far, more beautiful and excellent, than obedience to mere law, unconnected with the goſpel; yet the former is of the ſame nature and kind with the latter, and conſiſts in loving God with all the heart, and his neighbour as himſelf. This has been obſerved, and explained in the above mentioned ſection.

In the preaching of the goſpel, there is an offer of a free pardon, and complete redemption, to all who are willing to comply with it; but men are not at liberty to reject it, without being accountable and held guilty for

ſuch

such conduct. They are required and commanded to accept of the offer, and conform to the gospel; and that upon the most dreadful penalty for refusing to obey.—Christ himself required of all to whom he preached to "Repent and believe the gospel;" and he, and John, who came before him, declared that he who believeth not on the Son of God, is condemned; that the wrath of God abideth on him, and he shall be damned.* The Apostle Paul says, "Now God commandeth all men, every where, to repent:" And that in preaching the gospel, he "Taught publicly, and from house to house, testifying, (that is, urging and requiring) both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."† He who truly repents and believes the gospel, and so really embraces it, and complies with the covenant of grace, though in an imperfect and low, even the lowest degree, is interested in the promises of the covenant, and shall be saved, though he do not come up to all that is required, at first, and to a perfect compliance with the gospel; and he will not come to a full and perfect compliance, and conformity to the covenant, until he is perfectly holy: For every degree of moral depravity, or all sin, is opposition to the gospel.

Believers are not under the law, but under grace.—By grace they are pardoned, and delivered from the curse of the law: And it is not by the righteousness of the law, or obedience to it, that they obtain pardon and the favour of God, and are made heirs of eternal life; but by the atonement and righteousness of Christ; and all this comes to them, as a free gift by sovereign grace. Nevertheless, they are not without law to God, but under the law to Christ; and their obligations to perfect obedience do not cease, but are greatly increased; and all their christian exercises

* Mark xvi. 16. John iii. 18, 36. † Acts xvii. 30. xx. 21.

exerciſes and life, and the whole of their duty, conſiſt in "keeping the commandments of God;" even thoſe two commandments, on which hang all the law and the prophets, "Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind. Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf."* And they do not arrive to the full and moſt perfect character of chriſtians, of the redeemed by Chriſt, nor are in the higheſt and moſt complete ſenſe united to Chriſt, until they are perfectly conformed to this law; which never takes place in any inſtance while in the body, in this life.

III. IN preaching the goſpel to ſinners, nothing is required or propoſed, to be done by them, which is ſhort of repentance and faith in Chriſt, or which does not imply this, in order to their obtaining ſalvation.

This is implied in the preceding obſervations; and the contrary is really inconſiſtent with them. In preaching the goſpel, ſalvation is freely offered to all who will accept of it; and men are invited and commanded to do this, and inevitable deſtruction is denounced againſt them who refuſe, and neglect the offered ſalvation. But a cordial acceptance of ſalvation, implies repentance and faith in Chriſt, which is a conformity and obedience to the law of God, ſo far as it takes place, and the exerciſe of real holineſs. If in the diſpenſation of the goſpel, it were propoſed to ſinners to do ſomething, and they were required to do it, which does not imply obedience to the law of God, nor acceptance of ſalvation, and which they may do, conſiſtent with their continuing enemies to God, and to reject the offered ſalvation with their whole heart, it would be really to drop and lay aſide all which the law requires, and ſo make it void, and to ſubſtitute ſomething in place of it, which ſtands in direct contradiction to it; even as contrary as ſin is to holineſs. The command to love

* Matth. xxii. 37, 39. 1 Cor. vii. 19. ix. 21.

love God, cannot make that a duty in which there is no love to God; but the exerciſe of enmity againſt him. And to require this, or any thing like it, as a duty, is to make void, and even oppoſe this command.

But as the contrary to this has been practiſed by many in preaching the goſpel, by exhorting and urging ſinners to do that which does not imply repentance and faith, or a cordial acceptance of the goſpel offer; but is conſiſtent with their continuing impenitent, and rejecting and hating Chriſt and the goſpel, and living in total diſobedience to the law of God, requiring them to love him with all their hearts; and doing that which is conſiſtent with all this, has been urged as their duty; and a ſet of duties, and a courſe of obedience, have been preſcribed for ſuch impenitent ſinners, to be done by them, while they continue impenitent enemies to Chriſt and the goſpel: And ſince there have been a difference of opinion, and not a little diſpute on this point, of late years, eſpecially in New-England; it is thought proper to attend to this ſubject more particularly in this ſection; hoping that ſomething may be ſaid which may ſerve to give light, and eſtabliſh the truth. A careful attention to the following particulars, conſidered together, and brought into one collected view, with their natural and juſt conſequences, may help to decide this point.

FIRST. MAN is naturally, and while unrenewed, in a ſtate of total moral depravity. His mind, his heart, is enmity againſt God, and his law: This is the nature and tenour of all his moral exerciſes, while he continues an impenitent ſinner, and rejects the goſpel.

This will now be taken for granted, as the evidence of it has been already given, and it is ſo abundantly aſſerted in ſcripture.* The conſequence from this is, that im-

* Part I. Chap. VIII.

penitent, unrenewed ſinners, do no good thing, no, not one of them, but are in all their moral conduct, wholly diſobedient: Therefore, they cannot be exhorted and commanded to do, what they actually do, while impenitent, without being exhorted and commanded to do that which is unreaſonable, wrong, and forbidden in the divine law; and ſuch a command would be very abſurd, unreaſonable, and wrong. Therefore, it is certain, no ſuch command can be found in the Bible; and no man has a right to form and give ſuch commands; or to imagine that impenitent ſinners, while they continue ſuch, ever do any duty, or any thing, as God requires it. God commands all men every where, to repent and believe the goſpel. If at the ſame time, he ſhould direct and command them to do any thing, while they continue impenitent, and in unbelief, and which implies diſobedience to his command to repent; would not one command ſtand in direct contradiction to the other; and the latter be at leaſt an implicit annulling or ſuſpending the former, and an allowance to live for a time, at leaſt, in impenitence and unbelief?

SECOND. THE moral depravity of men, and their obſtinacy in impenitence and rebellion, however great and ſtrong, does not in the leaſt remove, or abate their obligations to repent, believe, and obey the divine commands; or afford any excuſe for their diſobedience, or extenuate the criminality of it. This has alſo been conſidered in the former part of this work*—and is indeed a ſelfevident propoſition, as the contrary is a plain contradiction. It follows, from this propoſition, that the moral depravity of man, and the oppoſition of his heart to repentance, however total and ſtrong, is no reaſon why any thing ſhort of true repentance, ſhould be recommended to him,

and

* Part I. Chap. VIII.

and required of him, as his duty; but is rather a reaſon againſt it, as ſuch propoſal and requirement, would imply an excuſe for continuing impenitent, becauſe they have ſuch a ſtrong averſion from it; and that repentance is not their immediate duty; as ſomething elſe which is conſiſtent with ſuch averſion, and with total impenitence, is ſubſtituted in the room of repentance. And it is preſumed no one would have thought of preſcribing impenitent, unbelieving duty, to ſinful men, which is conſiſtent with their total oppoſition of heart, to God, and his law, to Chriſt and the goſpel, had he believed the above propoſition, and kept it properly in view: And that it will appear to thoſe who properly attend to this ſubject, and the manner in which it has been treated, that they who plead for a ſet of duties to be done by men, while impenitent unbelievers, and without conformity of heart to the law of God, or the goſpel, do really ſuppoſe that the moral depravity of man is attended with an *inability* to repent and embrace the goſpel, which does, in ſome degree at leaſt, excuſe him for not repenting immediately: And if their minds were wholly freed from this notion, they would no longer contend for ſuch duties, or imagine they could have any exiſtence.

It may be proper to obſerve here, that from the particulars now mentioned, with the arguments from them, if they be juſt, it appears that it would be inconſiſtent with what has been already advanced in this ſyſtem, to admit that the goſpel enjoins or propoſes any duty that does not imply repentance, as it has been aſſerted, as important, fundamental truths, that man is totally depraved; and yet this does not diminiſh his obligation to repent and embrace the goſpel, and even to be perfectly holy; or afford the leaſt excuſe for one ſin: And that there is no duty which does not imply conformity of heart to the law of God.

THIRD. ALL the law, and commands of God, reſpect the heart or will; and there is no obedience to any command, or any moral agency, in which the will is not concerned and active: And no obedience or duty is done by any man, if his heart be not obedient, and comformed to the command. There is no virtue or vice, or any morality, in external actions, any farther than they are connected with the will, as the production and fruit of that. And whatever is the production and fruit of a vicious heart, or will, acting from unreaſonable and bad motives, and for a wrong and forbidden end, is not duty, but ſin, whether it be in words or actions, or whatever it may be; and whatever be the appearance of it in the ſight of men, who cannot ſee the heart. This is ſo plain a caſe, and the irreſiſtible dictate of the feelings and common ſenſe of mankind in general, that it is needleſs to try to prove it, or ſay any thing more to illuſtrate it.

From this it follows, that whatever is ſaid, or done, in external actions, by a perſon who is wholly impenitent, and with a wicked, diſobedient heart, is not duty, but ſin. Therefore, it is certain, that God never commands any man to do any thing ſo; and with a diſobedient, impenitent heart. And when only an external action, is mentioned, and commanded, the command has reſpect to the heart, and requires the action to be done in obedience to him; and not in impenitence and diſobedience. Therefore, no man has a right to direct ſinners to any thing as duty, and as commanded by God, with an impenitent, diſobedient heart; or to flatter him that he may do ſome duty, while he continues wholly impenitent, and wicked.

FOURTH. THE ſcripture does not afford any ſupport to the opinion that ſinners are required to do duty, which they may do while they continue impenitent, as nothing

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is there required as duty, which does not imply repentance; but the contrary. Whenever ſinners are there addreſſed, and called upon to do, they are commanded to repent and believe the goſpel, or to do that which implies this, and a real conformity of heart to the moral law of God.

If ſinners were to be directed and commanded, in preaching the goſpel, to do ſome duty, in order to be ſaved, which is not repentance, nor implies any love to God, or acceptance of Chriſt, moſt certainly Jeſus and his Apoſtles, would have done this, and ſome inſtances of it, at leaſt, would have been recorded. But as there is not one inſtance of this, nor the leaſt hint of it; but many inſtances of the contrary, is not ſuch a notion and practice wholly without any warrant? When the Apoſtles were applied to, with the ſerious, important queſtion, What ſhall we do? They anſwer, "Repent, and believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt."* And this was agreeable to the example and command of Chriſt: In preaching the goſpel of the kingdom of God, ſaying, "Repent ye, and believe the goſpel."† He commanded his diſciples to go forth, and call on men to repent. And when he gave commiſſion to the Apoſtles to preach the goſpel, he directed them to preach repentance and remiſſion of ſin, in his name.‡

When the young ruler came to Chriſt, and aſked him what he ſhould do, that he might inherit eternal life? Jeſus did not direct him to do any thing lower than keeping the commandments, and that which implied love to him; even to ſell all that he had, and give it to the poor, and come and follow him. This was moſt contrary to the reigning diſpoſition of his heart, and Chriſt knew he was not willing to comply with it; and he went away ſorrowful. Why did not Chriſt direct him to ſomething

* Acts ii. 38. xvi. 31. † Mark i. 14, 15. ‡ Luke xiv. 47.

lower, which he might do conſiſtent with his reigning luſt, and his continuing an impenitent ſinner? If it were proper to give ſuch direction to any ſinner on earth, was it not ſo in this inſtance? Why was he not told, that though he could not now find in his heart to forſake all for Chriſt, and heaven; yet he might do ſome, yea, much duty, which would bring him nearer to heaven, and might iſſue in that happy event; even that which is conſiſtent with an impenitent, worldly mind, which it was poſſible with God only to remove?

Therefore, ſince there is no inſtance to be found in ſcripture, of directing and requiring ſinners to do that as their duty, which is conſiſtent with continuing impenitent; but whenever they are addreſſed, they are exhorted and commanded to repent, or to do that which implies repentance, and love, and ſubmiſſion to God; this ſerves to confirm the reaſons which have been given under the preceding particulars, to prove that impenitent ſinners do no duty; and that nothing which does not imply repentance, can reaſonably be propoſed or required of them as their duty, in preaching the goſpel to them.—Is not the invariable conduct of Chriſt and his Apoſtles ſufficient to decide this matter? May not their example be ſafely followed? Is is it not wrong, and even preſumptuous to deviate from it, and preſcribe to men, as their duty, that which they never mentioned in their addreſs to ſinners.*

FIFTH.

* Some have mentioned the following paſſages, and ſome others, as directions and calls to ſinners to do what is there commanded, while they continue impenitent, and in a ſtate of ſin. "Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate. Labour not for the meat which periſheth, but for that which endureth unto everlaſting life, &c." But it has been obſerved, by thoſe who have attended to theſe paſſages, and others, which have been adduced to the ſame purpoſe, that when properly conſidered with the context, and other parts of ſcripture, they do not appear to direct to duties, to be done by ſinners, while they continue impenitent; but imply thoſe obedi-

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FIFTH. TEACHING ſinners, that while they continue impenitent, they do no duty, nothing that God requires of them, and that he commands them to repent and embrace the goſpel; and that they can have no excuſe for not doing it immediately, has no tendency to remove or diſcourage their attention to the things of the goſpel, which relate to their ſalvation, and to make them careleſs and ſecure in their ſins; but it has a contrary tendency, viz. to awaken their attention, and to promote their conviction, concern and engagedneſs of mind, to obtain the ſalvation of their ſouls.

In preaching the goſpel to them, they are to be told what is their ſtate and character, how guilty they are, and wholly inexcuſable in their ſins; how infinitely dreadful and dangerous their ſituation is. The goſpel is to be opened and explained to them, and what is neceſſary in order to their obtaining the ſalvation, which is therein offered to ſinners: And they are to be called upon to repent and embrace the goſpel as their firſt and immediate duty; for the neglect and refuſal of which, they can have no poſſible excuſe; but it is a moſt aggravated and dangerous ſin. The motives and encouragement to embrace the goſpel, are to be ſet before them; and the promiſes to all who comply are to be urged; and the awful threatnings to all who refuſe, and continue in their impenitence, denounced. "He that believeth, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not, ſhall be damned."

Surely nothing can be thought of or deviſed, that would be better ſuited than this, to arreſt and awaken the attention

ent exerciſes of heart, which are connected with ſalvation. No command or direction which is to be found in ſcripture, can reaſonably be underſtood as preſcribing only that which ſinners are to do, and may do, while impenitent and diſobedient; unleſs it be expreſsly ſaid that they are to do it, and may do what is commanded, while ſuch. It may be preſumed, no ſuch paſſage of ſcripture will ever be produced, as it would appear to contradict the reſt of the Bible, and to be even a contradiction in terms.

attention of ſinners; and give them the greateſt uneaſineſs and concern, in a view of the wretched, dangerous ſituation in which they are, while they continue impenitent rejecters of the great ſalvation. And it is impoſſible that any perſon ſhould go on, careleſs and eaſy in ſin, who ſo believes and realizes theſe truths, as to make the deep impreſſion on his mind, which they are ſuited to produce. This has been proved by fact and experiment in thouſands of inſtances. By ſuch preaching, a great and general awakening and concern was ſpread through the nation of the Jews, under the miniſtry of John the Baptiſt; and many preſſed into the kingdom of heaven. He laid before them their ſin and danger, and called upon them to repent and fly from the wrath to come; and preſcribed no duty or doings ſhort of this, of which we have the leaſt intimation. The Apoſtles preached after the ſame tenor, and were ſucceeded in being the inſtruments of awakening and converting many thouſands. Three thouſand were awakened and converted in one day, and under one ſermon, preached by the Apoſtle Peter, in which he propoſed nothing to them as duty, to be done by them, ſhort of repentance and believing on Chriſt. This he inculcated as their next and immediate duty.

The doctrine, that impenitent ſinners do no duty, and conſequently nothing is required of them as duty, to be done by them, while they continue impenitent, is liable to be abuſed by men; and no doubt has been preverted and abuſed to bad purpoſes; as the goſpel itſelf, and every truth contained in it, has been, by men of corrupt minds. But this is not the leaſt evidence, that it is not an important, revealed truth. It has been ſaid, that according to this, nothing is required of impenitent ſinners, and they have nothing to do. Since they have no heart to repent, they have nothing to do; they will

therefore

therefore not concern themſelves about religion or ſalvation, nor pay any attention to theſe things. And ſome, perhaps many, are profeſſing to practice upon this, and to neglect all attention to religion, and concern about it; and to indulge themſelves in a courſe of vice, under the notion that nothing is required of them, which they have a heart to do; and therefore there is no encouragement to attend to the goſpel, or any advantage in it.

What has been juſt now obſerved, is a ſufficient confutation of ſuch a ſentiment and practice. It appears that there is enough to be ſaid to ſinners; and how much is required of them, even more than they are diſpoſed to do. And are they to be wholly excuſed; and is nothing to be required of them, becauſe they are not willing to do it? They are to be warned, and called upon to repent, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. Thus the prophets were ordered to do; and thus did John the Baptiſt, Chriſt and his Apoſtles. And by attending on them, many were convinced and perſuaded, and found a heart diſpoſed to repent and obey. And there is no encouragement to hope for ſalvation in any other way.

It is contrary to the plain dictates of reaſon and ſcripture, to ſuppoſe, that men may not be required and commanded by God, to do that which they are not willing to do, and when it is certain they will not comply with the command, unleſs God ſhall give them a heart to obey, make them willing by his power, and work in them to will and to do it. He has a right to ſpeak and command, whether they have a heart to obey or not. If he have not, there can be no law, moral government, or ſin.

There are the following reaſons for pointing out to men their duty, and requiring them to repent and embrace the goſpel, in order to be ſaved, though they be now impenitent, and have no heart to comply; and it

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is certain they never will have, till God gives them a new heart.

1. Becauſe this is their duty, and it is proper and important that they ſhould be told, and be made to know what is their duty: For,

2. If they know not what is their duty, and what is neceſſary for them to be and do, in order to be ſaved, they cannot know what their ſtate and character is, whether they be willing to comply with it or not; and conſequently, will not know what obſtinate, wicked hearts they have, and what need they ſtand in of ſovereign grace, to give them new hearts; which is of the greateſt importance to be known.

3. Becauſe they muſt ſo far actually comply, as to repent and obey the goſpel, or periſh. Therefore, as they muſt really do this, and it muſt be their own voluntary act, in order to be ſaved, it is proper and neceſſary, that they ſhould be made to know it, by requiring it of them. And the goſpel cannot be preached in any other way.

4. Becauſe in this way, ſinners are brought to repentance, and have a heart given them to embrace the goſpel. As they could not be under advantages to do this, unleſs the goſpel were preached to them, and they were called upon to repent and believe; ſo men are brought to this in no other way, and by no other means, but the preaching of the goſpel: And under this, and when men enjoy the goſpel, God opens the hearts of whom he pleaſes, to receive the truths which are publiſhed, and to obey them, as he opened the heart of Lydia to receive the goſpel preached by Paul. When men are required to repent and embrace the goſpel, it is not known to any man that they will not have a heart, and be willing to comply, till the experiment is made, and it appears that they continue impenitent: And if they appear to remain impenitent

itent for a time, it is not known that they will not ſoon come to repentance. God is under obligation to none, and he gives a heart to repent, to thoſe who live under the goſpel, to whom he pleaſes, and when and where he ſees fit. But it appears that all have not ſuch an heart given them. The goſpel is preached to many, who perſevere in rejecting it, and periſh more dreadfully, than if they had never heard of it. It is made a ſavour of death unto death to them.* Therefore,

5. Many important ends are anſwered by preaching the goſpel to them who never have a heart to repent and embrace it; by which they have ſalvation freely offered to them, and they are required to hear and obey.

This is neceſſary, in order to preach the goſpel to any; for none knows but God, who will repent and accept of the ſalvation which is offered, till the trial is made, and the offer is made to all who hear it; and no diſtinction can be made, till men diſtinguiſh themſelves, by believing, or rejecting the goſpel. This is alſo neceſſary in order fully to expreſs and ſhow the free grace exhibited in the goſpel. By this are diſcovered the exceeding obſtinacy and wickedneſs of man, in his rejecting ſuch a kind offer of pardon and ſalvation, and his great ill deſert; and it will greatly illuſtrate the juſtice and propriety of his eternal puniſhment. And the diſtinguiſhing, ſovereign grace of God, to thoſe who embrace the goſpel, and are ſaved, will hereby be ſet in a more clear and affecting light, than otherwiſe it could be.—And many other important ends will be doubtleſs anſwered, which are not now thought of by man.

SIXTH. TEACHING men that they may do that which is their duty, and what God requires them to do, while they continue impenitent, and in an unconverted ſtate,

* 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

ſtate, appears to have a bad influence many ways, and tends to delude them, and prevent their embracing the goſpel.

This tends to deceive them, with reſpect to their own true character, and make them to think much better of themſelves, than they ought to think; and to overlook the exceeding obſtinacy and wickedneſs of their own hearts; and that there is no good thing in them, and they are wholly undone and loſt in themſelves: And therefore tends to prevent their underſtanding the goſpel, and coming to Chriſt, who came to ſeek and to ſave thoſe only who are loſt.

Men, through the natural pride of their hearts, are diſpoſed to ſhut their eyes againſt that light which diſcovers their evil deeds, and lays open the total depravity and wickedneſs of their hearts; and are therefore ready to lay hold on any thing which oppoſes, and tends to ſhut out this light. And ſo long as they are told, and believe they are doing ſome duty, they will think they have ſome good thing in their hearts, and do that which is pleaſing to God; and will naturally, and even neceſſarily rely upon it, as in ſome degree, at leaſt, recommending them to the favour of God, which will effectually prevent their coming to Chriſt, as poor and wretched, blind and naked.

And this way of teaching ſinners, has a natural and ſtrong tendency to lead them to think and feel, that they have ſome excuſe for not repenting and believing on Chriſt; and that they are not blameable for this, nor can it reaſonably be required of them. For while they are directed to do ſome things as duty, which are conſiſtent with impenitence, and are expreſsly told they are to be done by unrenewed ſinners, antecedent to their repentance, and embracing the goſpel, they are naturally led to think, there is ſuch difficulty in the latter, to which they find

find no heart or inclination, that they are not obliged to repent immediately; and that their duty conſiſts chiefly, if not wholly, in waiting on God, for a heart to repent and embrace the goſpel: And in this way, they continue blind to their greateſt ſin, and which is the chief aggravation of all their ſins, viz. unbelief; and imagine they are doing their duty, and waiting on God for his bleſſing, with an impenitent, rebellious heart, and while they are "abominable diſobedient, and unto every good work reprobate!"

It has been obſerved, that it is probable, duties to be done by impenitent, unconverted ſinners, while they continue ſuch, would never have been thought of and urged, had not an opinion been entertained, that they are under an inability to repent and believe on Chriſt, which does excuſe them, in ſome meaſure, at leaſt, for continuing impenitent, and unconverted. From this apprehenſion and ſentiment, ſinners have not been called upon to repent and embrace the goſpel immediately; but to do ſome lower duties, which do not imply repentance, or renovation of heart; which are required as the *inſtrumental duties*, in order to obtain ſaving mercies; and which they may and can do, while unconverted; and therefore can have no excuſe for neglecting them. And this appears to be confirmed by fact. Moſt, if not all of thoſe, who have pled for ſuch duties, and have preſcribed them to ſinners, to be done by them, as unconverted and impenitent, have, at the ſame time, either expreſsly or implicitly repreſented them as under ſuch an inability to perform duties in a holy manner, which does, at leaſt, in ſome meaſure excuſe, and does not wholly conſiſt in their having no deſire or inclination to repent, and oppoſition of heart, to it; but that there is, in their caſe, *a cannot*, independent of a *will not*; and that the latter is therefore diſtinct from the former; and that the former

kind

kind of inability does excuſe, as it certainly muſt, ſo far as it does not conſiſt wholly in the evil inclination of the will, and is independent of it. And from this opinion, many public teachers, and authors, have not called on ſinners and required of them, to repent immediately; but have directed them to do many duties, while they continue unconverted; or at leaſt have inſiſted chiefly on the latter, as they conſider them able to do the latter, though they cannot do the former.

This appears to be one great and chief mean of promoting, confirming and ſpreading far and wide the doctrine, that ſinners are under an inability to repent and believe on Chriſt, which is a good excuſe for neglecting it, and living in an unconverted ſtate. Hence, when they are, in ſcripture language, called upon to repent, and accept of offered mercy, it is common for them to ſay, they *cannot* do this, and offer it as an excuſe for their not turning to God, and embracing the goſpel. And as this is a ſentiment ſo agreeable to the hearts of ſinners, as it excuſes their impenitence, and helps to ſhield them againſt a true conviction of their criminality in continuing in an unconverted ſtate; and leads them to think they have ſincere and ſtrong deſires to be chriſtians; but cannot, through ſome inſuperable difficulty, independent of their will, which cannot be removed by their inclination and endeavours to do it; they greedily imbibe it, and are diſpoſed to hold it faſt. So long as this ſentiment is cordially embraced, it will prevent a true and thorough conviction of their own character and ſtate; and therefore, has a bad and dangerous tendency.— It is an implicit denial of the total depravity of man; and miſrepreſents the nature of the ſinner's moral depravity, and inability to do that which is holy and good; as if it rendered him innocent and blameleſs, while he continues unholy and diſobedient.

Jeſus

Jeſus Chriſt, indeed, ſays, "No man can come to me, except the Father, who hath ſent me, draw him."* And it is abundantly declared in the ſcripture, that no man will repent, and do what is required of him, unleſs his heart be renewed by divine influence. But, at the ſame time, their neglect and refuſal to hear and obey, is repreſented as wholly their own fault; and that their inability is their crime, conſiſting wholly in the inexcuſable wickedneſs of their own hearts. And the requirement is not laid aſide or lowered, becauſe they are unwilling to obey; and ſomething ſhort of a compliance ſubſtituted in the room of it. When Chriſt ſpake the words that have been mentioned, the context ſhows that he did not mention their inability as any excuſe for their not coming to him; but conſidered it as very criminal in them, and as rather an evidence and aggravation of their wickedneſs. And he conſtantly invited and required all to come to him; and told them their inability conſiſted in the ſtrong and fixed oppoſition of their hearts to it. He ſaid, "Ye *will not* come to me, that ye might have life." We do not find him ſaying, Since ye are not able to come to me, I will preſcribe to you ſome other duty, which you may and muſt do, while you refuſe to come to me, and have ſuch a ſtrong oppoſition of heart to me, that you cannot come. Nor has any one yet been able to diſcover any duty enjoined by him, which men may do with a heart which is wholly in oppoſition to him.

It is now left to the reader to judge, whether the particulars which have been here mentioned, conſidered in their connexion and conſequences, do not prove the truth of the propoſition to which they relate; and make it evident, that in preaching the goſpel, nothing is propoſed and enjoined as duty, to be done by men, which is conſiſtent with their rejecting the offers of it, and continuing impenitent.

SECTION

* John vi. 44.

SECTION X.

That all true Believers, do perſevere in Faith and Holineſs, to the End of Life, and cannot fail of Eternal Salvation.

THE doctrine of the perſeverance, and final ſalvation of all who believe in Chriſt, and are once intereſted in the covenant of grace, has been repeatedly brought into view, eſpecially in the three preceding ſections. It has been aſſerted, or often ſuppoſed, in what has been ſaid on faith, juſtification, and the covenant of grace; and ſome ſcriptures have been mentioned, which do ſuppoſe and aſſert it. But it is proper that this point ſhould be more particularly conſidered and explained, and the evidence of the truth of it, be ſet in as clear and convincing light as may be.

Indeed, this doctrine is ſo connected with the other doctrines which have been advanced in the foregoing parts of this ſyſtem, and ſo implied in them, or follows from them, as a natural and undeniable conſequence, that they who underſtand and believe them, will not heſitate about the truth of this. They only are diſpoſed to deny, or doubt of the truth of this doctrine, and do not ſee the evidence of it in divine revelation, who do not believe man, to be naturally ſo totally corrupt, and ſo abſolutely dependent on God, for a new heart, and every degree of holineſs, and for ſalvation; and that all this ſo wholly depends on the decree and will of God, as has been repreſented above: But imagine that the ſalvation

vation of men, depends on their free will and conduct, independent of God, in ſuch a manner and meaſure, that *they* turn the ſcale in favour of their ſalvation, and not God, by any powerful influence of his, which ſhall determine whether they ſhall be ſaved or not. And therefore, if they do now believe, and are in favour with God, it wholly depends on themſelves, and not on any particular, determining influence of heaven, whether they ſhall perſevere or not, in faith and holineſs, to the end of life; conſequently there is no ſecurity againſt their falling away, and periſhing. Therefore, if the doctrines which have been advanced in this ſyſtem, have been proved to be contained in the holy ſcriptures; and conſequently, that the ſcheme juſt mentioned, is erroneous and unſcriptural, the doctrine now under conſideration, will be admitted of courſe, without any diſpute. In order to explain this doctrine, and remove or obviate miſtakes and miſrepreſentations reſpecting it, and ſtate the evidence of the truth of it, the following obſervations muſt be made.

1. That believers never will totally and finally fall away, ſo as to periſh, is not owing to the nature of true grace, or any power or ſufficiency in themſelves to perſevere unto the end; but this depends wholly on the will, and conſtant influence and energy of God, working in them to will and to do. They are kept *by the power of God*, through faith unto ſalvation. It is God, who having begun a good work in them, will carry it on until the day of Jeſus Chriſt.* If the holy ſpirit were taken from the believer, and he left to himſelf to ſtand or fall, he would immediately ceaſe to be a believer, and fall totally from a ſtate of grace.

2. The perſeverance of believers is conſiſtent with their being ſanctified but in part; and guilty of much

* Phil. i. 6.

ſin; and even by ſurpriſe, and great temptations, of particular groſs outward acts of ſin. But they never become totally corrupt and ſinful, as they were before, and as all the unregenerate are; and they do not ſin *with their whole heart*: They being born of God, do not commit ſin, in this ſenſe, and as others do; "for his ſeed remaineth in them; And they cannot thus ſin, becauſe they are born of God."* By falling into ſin, they may bring themſelves into great darkneſs, and loſe all ſenſible evidence that they are born of God: But their faith and grace never wholly fails; ſo that they do not fall from it totally; but this ſpiritual life continues in ſome degree of it, at leaſt, and it will ſooner or later, and will doubtleſs in ordinary caſes, very ſoon, kindle up in renewed ſenſible acts of repentance, faith and love. Peter was an inſtance of this; by which this obſervation is illuſtrated.

3. The certain perſeverance of true ſaints in faith and holineſs, unto ſalvation, does not imply or ſuppoſe, that they ſhall be ſaved, whether they thus perſevere or not; or that they ſhall perſevere without perſevering. It would be quite needleſs to obſerve, that ſuch a palpable contradiction is not implied in this doctrine, were it not that ſome have ſeemed to underſtand it ſo. They object to the doctrine, the tendency of it, to make thoſe who believe it, careleſs about a holy life, and to lead them to indulge their luſts, and live in ſin. There can be no tendency in this doctrine to this, unleſs the certainty of the perſeverance of believers in faith and holineſs, renders it needleſs to perſevere in faith and holineſs, which is impoſſible, as it is a contradiction in terms. If true believers ſhall perſevere in faith and holineſs; then ſuch perſeverance is abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation, and there is no other way to be ſaved; and he is not a true

* 1 John iii. 9.

true believer who does not thus perſevere. No doctrine therefore, can more aſſert and eſtabliſh the importance and neceſſity of a careful and reſolute perſeverance in holy living, than this. And it affords the greateſt encouragement to the believer, to work out his own ſalvation with fear and trembling, while he relies upon the promiſe and grace of God, to work in him, both to will and to do.*

This leads to another obſervation.

4. The certain perſeverance of the ſaints, in faith and holineſs, does not render their activity, conſtant care and exertions, needleſs, or ſuppoſe this unneceſſary; but the contrary. It is *their own* perſeverance in faith and holineſs which is made certain; they themſelves, therefore, muſt live by faith and in the practice of holineſs; for they cannot perſevere in any other way, but by a conſtant attention to this matter, watching and praying, and working out their own ſalvation with fear and trembling. To neglect this, and to take a contrary courſe, is to draw back unto perdition, and not to believe to the ſaving of the ſoul.† How abſurd is it then, for a perſon to ſay, or think, that ſince his care and activity, in living a holy life, are made certain, as neceſſary in order to his ſalvation: therefore he will exerciſe no care and concern about it, nor do any thing towards it, but the contrary! It is very certain, that he who has a prevailing diſpoſition to think and feel thus, is not only guilty of groſs contradiction, but is a ſtranger to true faith, and has neither part nor lot in this matter. Therefore,

5. The doctrine of the certain perſeverance of believers unto the end of life, is ſo far from rendering the uſe of means, and ſetting motives before them, in order to promote and effect, their living a life of faith and holineſs, unreaſonable or needleſs, that all this is as important

* Phil. ii. 12, 13. † Heb. x. 39.

tant and neceſſary, as if this doctrine were not true, and their perſeverance were not made certain.

If God have promiſed that all who are intereſted in the covenant of grace, ſhall perſevere in a holy life, and in this way be ſaved; this ſuppoſes that they ſhall be under advantages, and have proper means uſed with them, in order for this, and that they ſhall have motives conſtantly ſet before them, to induce and perſuade them to obedience, and live a holy life; and to guard them againſt the contrary. Hence the propriety and neceſſity of all the inſtitutions of the goſpel, directions, inſtructions, exhortations and commands, and the various and numerous motives, to furniſh believers with proper means, and to induce them to perſevere in their faith; without which, the intention and promiſe of God, that they ſhall perſevere, could not be effected in a proper, rational way, conſiſtent with the nature of man.

How greatly miſtaken are they then, who ſuppoſe, if the perſeverance of believers be made certain in the covenant of grace, this would render all ſuch means, motives, exhortations, promiſes and threatnings uſeleſs and unreaſonable! And becauſe theſe do take place, according to the word of God, they infer, that this doctrine cannot be true!

6. This doctrine ſuppoſes perſeverance to the end of life, in faith and holineſs, neceſſary in order to ſalvation; that ſuch only ſhall be ſaved: Therefore, that they who do not perſevere, will not be ſaved, but periſh; whatever good attainments, faith and holineſs they may appear to have for a while; and however confident they may be that they ſhall be ſaved.

If believers might be ſaved, without perſevering in faith, to the end of life, there would be no need that their perſeverance ſhould be made ſure; and there would be no propriety in promiſing this, as ſuch a great

privilege,

privilege, and as if it were, neceſſary to ſalvation. It is abundantly declared in ſcripture, that they only who overcome and keep the words of Chriſt to the end, ſhall be ſaved. "He that continueth to the end ſhall be ſaved. If ye continue in my word, then are ye my diſciples indeed. If a man *abide not in me*, he is caſt forth as a branch, and is withered."* Theſe and many other declarations in the ſcripture of the ſame kind, are ſo far from being inconſiſtent with the doctrine of the certain perſeverance of all true believers, that the truth contained in ſuch paſſages, is ſuppoſed, and implicitly aſſerted in this doctrine.

It has been aſked, why ſuch declarations are made in the ſcripture, if no true believer does ever fall away; but certainly will continue to the end?

The anſwer is at hand. They are made, becauſe it is true that none can be ſaved, unleſs they perſevere; and it is proper and important, that this truth ſhould be known, and kept in view, to prevent perſons flattering themſelves, that they have been, and are true believers, though they ſit ſtill and do little or nothing, neglecting the work of faith, and labour of love; and though they have fallen into a ſettled courſe of apoſtacy. And ſuch declarations, are ſuited, and even neceſſary, to diſtinguiſh true believers from others; and to excite them to care and watchfulneſs, leſt they ſhould apoſtatize; and to zeal and activity in obedience, and engagedneſs to perſevere in faith and holineſs, by a patient continuance in well doing, ſeeking for glory, honour and immortality.

If any ſay, that theſe declarations ſuppoſe that true believers may fall away, and periſh; and therefore are inconſiſtent with the certain perſeverance of all ſuch;

Anſwer. This is certainly a miſtake. They neither aſſert, nor ſuppoſe, any ſuch thing. Every true believer may

* Mat. x. 26. John viii. 31. xv. 6.

may perſevere to the end, conſiſtent with theſe declarations, and they may be the means of their perſevering.— It is true, that he who does not perſevere, but draws back and apoſtatizes, ſhall not be ſaved; but it is equally true, that all ſuch never were true believers; but their faith was eſſentially different from true faith, and therefore, only a temporary faith; and this is diſcovered by their falling away. Therefore, the Apoſtle John ſays, of ſuch apoſtates, "They went out from us, but they were not of us: For if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: But they went out, that they might be made manifeſt, that they were not all of us."* Theſe declarations do indeed ſuppoſe, that perſons may ſet out and run well to appearance, for a time; but after that, when temptation comes, fall away, becauſe they had no root in themſelves, and never were true believers; and are ſuited to detect ſuch, and to warn and guard all againſt apoſtacy.

7. That the perſeverance of believers in holineſs to ſalvation, is ſecured to them in the covenant of grace, is abundantly aſſerted in divine revelation. A number of paſſages which expreſs or imply this doctrine, have already been occaſionally mentioned, in the foregoing ſections, and it would ſwell this ſection into a volume, to tranſcribe all the paſſages of ſcripture, which either expreſsly aſſert, or imply the certain perſeverance and ſalvation of all who once become truly pious: Only a few therefore, of the many, will be mentioned. Indeed, if there were but one ſentence in the Bible, which expreſsly, or even implicitly aſſerted this doctrine, which is ſo reaſonable and deſirable, it would be a ſufficient warrant to receive it, as an important truth.

The promiſes ſo often made to them who believe, that they ſhall be ſaved, do connect ſalvation with the firſt act

* 1 John ii. 19.

act of faith, which ſuppoſes, as has been before obſerved, that true faith, is always a perſevering faith; which could not be ſo, were it not made ſuch, by the promiſe of God in the covenant of grace, by which he engages to the believer, that his faith ſhall never fail; but that he ſhall perſevere in believing, ſo that the end of his faith ſhall be the ſalvation of his ſoul. The Apoſtle Peter gives this account of the matter, and tells in what way, believers perſevere unto ſalvation. Speaking to believers, he tells them, That an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, is reſerved in heaven for them, who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto ſalvation.* The certainty of the final ſalvation of every one who believeth on him, is very particularly and expreſsly aſſerted by Chriſt, in the words following: "Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that ſent me, hath everlaſting life, and ſhall not come into condemnation; but is paſſed from death unto life."† The believer could not be ſaid to *have everlaſting life*, and to have already paſſed from death unto life, ſo as never again to fall into a ſtate of condemnation, unleſs ſalvation were made ſure to him, upon his firſt believing, and conſequently perſeverance in faith, unto ſalvation, in the covenant of grace, the tenor of which is here expreſſed by the Redeemer. Still more expreſs and ſtrong, if poſſible, is the following declaration of his: "All that the Father giveth me, ſhall come to me; and him that cometh to me, *I will in no wiſe caſt out.* And this is the will of him that ſent me, that every one which ſeeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlaſting life; and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day."‡ And again he ſays, "My ſheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they ſhall never periſh, neither

* 1 Peter i. 4, 5. † John v. 24. ‡ John vi. 37, 40.

neither ſhall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."* Agreeable to this, he prays the Father, that all who did then believe him, and all that ſhould believe to the end of the world, might be kept ſecure from falling away, and perſevere in holineſs to eternal life. "Holy Father, keep through thine own name, thoſe whom thou haſt given me, that they may be one, as we are. I pray not that thou ſhouldſt take them out of the world, but that thou ſhouldſt keep them from the evil. Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth. Father, I will that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me, where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou haſt given me. Neither pray I for theſe alone, but for them alſo who ſhall believe on me through their word."†

The Apoſtle Paul aſſerts, that ſalvation and eternal glory is connected with converſion and juſtification, in the following remarkable paſſage, in his letter to the church at Rome; where he traces the ſalvation of ſinners, from the foundation to the topſtone. We know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpoſe. For whom he did foreknow, he alſo did predeſtinate, to be conformed to the image of his Son. Moreover, whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called; and whom he called, them he alſo juſtified: And whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorfied."‡ From this he goes on to the end of the chapter, to ſhow the impoſſibility, that any true chriſtian, ſhould be ſeparated from the love of God and Chriſt, and ſo periſh. The Apoſtle John ſays to believers, "The anointing which ye have received of him, *abideth in you*: As the ſame anointing teacheth

* John x. 27, 28, 29. † John xvii. ‡ Rom. viii. 28, 29, 30.

teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie; and even as it hath taught you, *ye ſhall abide in him.*"* By the anointing is meant the Spirit of Chriſt, which he promiſed his diſciples ſhould be in them and *abide with them forever.* "I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another Comforter, *that he may abide with you forever;* even the ſpirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, becauſe it ſeeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth in you, *and ſhall be in you.*"† Of the ſame holy ſpirit he ſpeaks, in his diſcourſe with the woman of Samaria, when he ſays, "Whoſoever drinketh of the water that I ſhall give him *ſhall never thirſt*: But the water that I ſhall give him, ſhall be in him a well of water, *ſpringing up into* everlaſting life."‡ By this ſpirit, believers are ſaid to be *ſealed to the day of redemption.* "Who hath alſo *ſealed us*, and given the *earneſt of the ſpirit* in our hearts."§ To be ſealed, is to be ſecured as the property of Chriſt, and belonging to him, and a certain token of complete redemption. The *earneſt*, is a part given, as a token and pledge that the whole ſhall be granted, even eternal life.

8. That all true believers in Chriſt, ſhould perſevere in faith, and none of them periſh, is conſiſtent with all other truths contained in divine revelation, and is really contained in many of them; and this appears every way proper and reaſonable.

That this doctrine is not inconſiſtent with any thing contained in the ſcripture, has been made evident; it is hoped, from what has been briefly ſaid, in ſome of the above particulars, to obviate the objections which ſome have made to it, from not underſtanding it, or the ſcriptures, on which they have grounded their objections. And if man be ſo wholly dependent on God for ſalvation;

* 1 John ii. 27. † John xiv. 16. 17. ‡ Chap. iv. 14.
§ 2 Cor. i. 22. Eph. iv. 30.

tion; ſo that this muſt be determined by his ſovereign will, as it has been made evident the ſcripture repreſents him to be; and he is brought into a ſtate of ſalvation, by the ſovereign, almighty influence of the divine Spirit, giving him a new heart, and making him a new creature, by which he is brought into a ſpiritual, vital union to Chriſt, and made a living member in his body, the Church; and is pardoned and juſtified for Chriſt's ſake, being, by this union, intereſted in his atonement and righteouſneſs; and is conſtantly dependent on God for every holy act and right thought: Then it is unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that after God has done all this, of his own ſovereign will, and made the believer ſo far meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the ſaints in light, having delivered him from the power of darkneſs, and tranſlated him into the kingdom of his dear Son;* he ſhould relinquiſh this work, and give him up to the power of ſin and ſatan, and leave him to periſh forever: But on the contrary, it is moſt reaſonable to conclude, with the Apoſtle Paul, and with him, "Be confident of this very thing, That he who hath begun ſuch a good work in him, will perform it until the day of Jeſus Chriſt."†

IMPROVEMENT.

I. SEE how exactly the bleſſings and promiſes of the covenant of grace are ſuited to the circumſtances, and to the heart of the believer; and to exhibit and diſplay ſovereign grace. He is abſolutely dependent on God for holineſs, and perſeverance in it, unto ſalvation; he feels himſelf infinitely unworthy of any favour, and without ſtrength in himſelf to do any good thing; he is ſurrounded with temptations and dangers; and ſatan, that ſtrong and ſubtle enemy, is ſeeking to deſtroy him. He would ſink into deſpair immediately, were it not for the promiſed

* Col. i. 12, 13. † Phil. i. 6.

promiſed power and grace of Jeſus Chriſt, who has promiſed he will never leave nor forſake them who truſt in him: But this gives him ſufficient and full ſupport, and he acknowledges and admires the wiſdom and grace of this covenant, as everlaſting, and ordered in the beſt manner, in all things, *and ſure*; and ſays with David, "This is all my ſalvation, and all my deſire." He knows this is no contrivance of man, no fiction, but an important, glorious reality, which has a divine ſtamp upon it. He believes, and rejoices, in hope of the glory of God.

II. We hence learn, what encouragement the poor, loſt, infinitely guilty, and miſerable ſinner, has to come to Chriſt, and truſt in him for every thing he can want. Chriſt enſures ſalvation, and perfection in holineſs, to every one who will come to him; and promiſes he will *in no wiſe* caſt them out, or forſake them. He will be their righteouſneſs, wiſdom and ſtrength. He will furniſh them with the whole armour of God, and teach their hands to war, and their fingers to fight, ſucceſsfully againſt ſin and the devil, and lead them on to complete victory.

III. This doctrine affords ſufficient encouragement to the trembling believer, who knows his own weakneſs, to make a public profeſſion, and eſpouſe the cauſe of Chriſt before the world, and engage, by his grace and aſſiſtance, to ſerve him, devoting himſelf to his intereſt and honour.

Some, who thought they were friends to Chriſt, have been afraid to make a public, chriſtian profeſſion, leſt they ſhould fall away and diſhonour him, by their ſinful conduct. This is owing to their not well attending to the promiſes of the covenant of grace. If they have a

heart

heart to devote themſelves to the ſervice of Chriſt ſincerely, and chooſe a holy life, in obedience to him, as the greateſt privilege and happineſs, they may ſafely truſt in him for that aſſiſtance by which they may live a holy life; for he has promiſed never to leave nor forſake them, but that his grace ſhall be ſufficient for them.

SECTION XI.

Concerning Believers Aſſurance of Salvation.

THEY who deny the certain perſeverance of all true believers, do of courſe, not believe it is poſſible that any man ſhould be ſure of his own ſalvation: And it is certain, that the latter, would not be poſſible, were the former not true. But if the covenant of grace contain a promiſe, that all who believe, ſhall perſevere in faith unto ſalvation; ſo that there is a certain connexion between the firſt act of faith and ſalvation; which has been proved in the preceding ſection; then, if the believer can know that he does now believe, he may infer, with certainty, that he ſhall be ſaved. He has juſt ſo much evidence, that he ſhall be ſaved, as he has, that he is a true believer, or is poſſeſſed of any thing which implies ſaving faith: And if he can be ſure, that he has any exerciſes of this kind, he may be equally ſure of final ſalvation.

This ſubject, may be explained, and the truth vindicated, by attending to the following particulars.

1. Aſſurance of ſalvation, is not eſſential to ſaving faith; or a perſon may believe in Jeſus Chriſt, and hereby be brought into a ſtate of ſalvation; and yet not know

know that he does believe in Christ, as they do who shall be saved.

Many have thought, that saving faith consists in believing that they shall be saved; that God loves them, and designs to save them, and Christ died for them, &c. or that this is, at least, implied in faith; that it is in this sense, an *appropriating act*, taking salvation as their own, knowing that it belongs to them, and that they shall be saved. But it has been shown, in the section on the nature of saving faith, that such a notion of faith is not agreeable to scripture. Saving faith is a direct act, believing the gospel to be true, approving of it, and receiving Christ as he is there offered. This may take place, and a man be a real believer in Christ, without any knowledge or consciousness, or even the least thought, that he does believe, or that his exercises are saving faith; for the latter consists in reflex acts of the mind, in a view or consciousness of what does, or has taken place in his heart, or what are the direct acts of it towards Christ, &c. The knowledge or assurance, that we do believe, is a reflex act of the mind, upon what has taken place in our hearts, by which we obtain a knowledge that we have believed, or do now believe: So that assurance of salvation, or that we have saving faith, is consequent on our believing; and saving faith must exist in the mind, and every thing essential to it must take place, before we can be conscious that we do believe, or have any knowledge of it, which consists in reflecting on those acts of our hearts, which are saving faith, or do imply it. These are, therefore, two distinct things in their nature, and are not necessarily connected. A person may have saving faith, and yet not reflect upon the acts of his own heart, so as to know or believe that they are those in which faith consists.

Saving faith is an appropriating act in this sense; it is receiving Christ as our saviour, taking salvation, as it is offered,

offered, and laying hold of the covenant of grace, ſo as to inſure all the bleſſings of it, to ourſelves. But this may be done without knowing that we do it, or thinking that the exerciſes of our minds, in which this conſiſts, are of the nature of ſaving faith. This knowledge is obtained by reflecting upon our own exerciſes, with diſcerning to ſee of what kind they are; and the latter is not neceſſarily connected with the former, as has been now obſerved.

It is granted, that ſaving faith, even in the firſt acts of it, may be ſo ſtrong and clear, that it may be attended with a conſciouſneſs, and aſſurance, that the perſon does believe, and ſhall be ſaved; ſo that believing and aſſurance of ſalvation, may be both together, and connected, in this reſpect; but ſtill they are two diſtinct things, and conſiſt in diſtinct acts of the mind; and the latter is conſequent on the former; though the believer may not diſtinguiſh them, and not know that they are not one and the ſame act.

2. Aſſurance of ſalvation, therefore, conſiſts in a perſon's conſciouſneſs of the acts of his own heart, that he does believe in Chriſt; and knowing from intuition or reflection, that he has attained to thoſe things which imply ſaving faith, and do accompany ſalvation, being infallibly connected with it, by the promiſe of God, in the covenant of grace.

3. It is certain, from fact and experience, that perſons may know what the exerciſes of their own hearts are; and it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe this may be the caſe in the inſtance before us. We do know what we love, and what we hate, in many inſtances at leaſt; and what kind of exerciſes we have, reſpecting many objects with which we are concerned, which are agreeable, and which are not ſo. We know we love ſome perſons, and that others are very diſagreeable to us. And no reaſon can be given, why

we

we may not believe and be sure, that the gospel is true, and that Christ is the Son of God, and be so pleased with his character, and the way of salvation by him, and have such strong and fervent love to him, as that we may be conscious that we have these exercises, and be sure we do believe, and love the Lord Jesus Christ, in sincerity and truth. Peter, was so conscious and sure that he loved his Lord, from an intuitive view, and reflection on the feelings and exercises of his own heart, that he could say, with confidence, and great assurance, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." And it is very unreasonable to suppose, that no person can have such constant, strong love to Christ, as to be sure he does love him, and has all those exercises which are implied in faith and love. Nothing can prevent this, but the low degree and weakness of these exercises, and the strength and appearance of contrary exercises, or mistakes with regard to the nature and operation of true grace.

4. It appears from scripture, that many good men, were in fact assured of their salvation. Job says, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another."* The Psalmist says, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever."† And it appears from the New Testament, that the Apostles, and many, if not the most of the primitive christians, were sure that they should be saved.—The Apostles speak in the language of assurance; and represent this to be common to believers of that day, by

* Job xix. 25, 26, 27. † Psal. lxxiii. 24, 26.

by uſing ſuch language in their name. The Apoſtle Paul ſays, "I know whom I have believed, and I am perſuaded (or confident) that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, againſt that day. I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe: Henceforth, there is laid up for me, a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, ſhall give me, at that day."* And he ſpeaks of himſelf as ſure of ſalvation, in his letter to the church at Philippi. "I *know* that this ſhall turn to my ſalvation, through your prayer, and the ſupply of the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt. To me to live is Chriſt, and to die is gain. I am in a ſtrait betwixt two, having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better."† And he uſes this language of aſſurance, when he ſpeaks in the name of others, as well as of himſelf. "*We know*, that if our earthly houſe of this tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a building of God, a houſe, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, &c."‡ The Apoſtle John, ſpeaks the ſame language. "*We know*, that we have paſſed from death to life, becauſe we love the brethren. *We know*, that we are of God. And we know, that the Son of God, is come, and hath given us an underſtanding that we may know him that is true: And we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jeſus Chriſt. This is the true God, and eternal life."§

Thus it appears from ſcripture, that believers have been in fact aſſured of their ſalvation: And therefore, that it is poſſible, that others, and even all believers, may attain to this, in the ſame way in which *they* obtained it, viz. by arriving to ſuch a degree of faith and chriſtian exerciſes, as to produce a conſciouſneſs, and certain knowledge, that they have faith, or chriſtian holineſs, which is connected with ſalvation.

This

* 2 Tim. i. 12. iv. 7, 8. † Chap. i. 19, 21, 23.
‡ 2 Cor. v. 1—8. § 1 John iii. 14. v. 19, 20.

This leads to another particular.

5. There is no other way of obtaining this aſſurance, but by having ſuch high degrees of chriſtian holineſs, in actual exerciſe; and accompanied with ſuch ſpiritual diſcerning, as that it is ſeen and known by the perſon who has it, to be real goſpel holineſs, or true, ſaving faith. True grace, or holineſs, is in the nature of it, clearly diſtinguiſhable from every thing which is not ſo: And if it be not diſtinguiſhed, by the believer, and ſeen and known to be what it is, it muſt be owing either to the ſmall degree of it, ſo that it cannot be diſcerned, or to the want of ſpiritual ſight and diſcerning, or both of them. And indeed, it is always owing to both theſe, if they may be conſidered as diſtinct things, which they really are not; for they both go together, and are inſeparable.* Holineſs is itſelf, light and diſcerning; and the more there is of this in the heart, and the ſtronger and more conſtant the exerciſes of it are, the more the mind is illuminated, and ſees ſpiritual things, more clearly; and with greater certainty diſcerns and diſtinguiſhes between true grace, and that which is not of that kind. Therefore, an increaſe of holineſs, magnifies the object, and renders it more viſible, and eaſy to be ſeen by the ſpiritual eye, ſo as to be diſtinguiſhed from every thing elſe; and at the ſame time, is the ſpiritual eye, and increaſes the ſpiritual ſight and ability of diſcerning, ſo as more clearly and with greater certainty to ſee and diſtinguiſh truth from falſehood. Therefore, in proportion to the degree of holineſs exerciſed, other things being equal, there will be evidence to the mind, that ſuch are the exerciſes of it, and conſequently that they are connected with ſalvation;

* Though the exerciſe of holineſs, and ſpiritual diſcerning, are ſeveral times mentioned diſtinctly, in this ſection, it is not intended that they ſhould be underſtood as two really diſtinct things. Holineſs, is ſpiritual light and diſcerning; and ſpiritual light, is holineſs. See the Section on Divine Illumination.

and they may riſe to ſuch a degree, and holineſs be acted out in ſuch a meaſure and manner, as to be accompanied with great and well grounded aſſurance, that it is real holineſs, which is by the promiſes of the covenant of grace connected with ſalvation. Therefore, this is the way which profeſſing chriſtians are exhorted to take, in order to have and maintain, aſſurance of their ſalvation.—"And we deſire, that every one of you do ſhow the ſame diligence, to the full aſſurance of hope, unto the end. That ye be not ſlothful, but followers of them, who, through faith and patience, inherit the promiſes."*—The "Aſſurance of Faith," is mentioned in this Epiſtle,† by which is meant, an aſſured belief of the truth of the goſpel, which is expreſſed in the following words, by Peter. "*We believe, and are ſure*, that thou art the Chriſt, the Son of the living God."‡ The *aſſurance of hope*, is an aſſured hope of ſalvation, which is the ſame with aſſurance of their ſalvation. And the way to obtain this, which is here propoſed, is diligence and engagedneſs in the exerciſe and expreſſion of love to Chriſt, and to his people, in oppoſition to ſloth and negligence; which is the ſame with the ſtrong and fruitful exerciſe of chriſtian grace. Therefore,

6. The believer is wholly dependent on God for aſſurance of ſalvation. Believers are entirely dependent on God for the leaſt degree of holineſs, as it is his ſovereign gift; but they have a ſpecial and peculiar favour from him, who are brought to ſuch a degree of holy exerciſe, and ſpiritual diſcerning, as to be aſſured that they are born of God, are his children, and ſhall inherit everlaſting life. It is by the ſpirit of God witneſſing with their ſpirits, that they are brought to ſee and know, they are the children of God. This the ſcripture declares. "The Spirit himſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God."§ This is done, not by

* Heb. vi. 11, 12. † Chap. x. 22. ‡ John vi. 69. § Rom. viii. 16.

by any immediate suggestion, revelation or testimony to the believer, that he is a child of God, as some have seemed to imagine; but by forming the heart to that degree of holy affection, and spiritual discerning, that the believer is able to look on this work of the spirit, and know that he is born of the spirit. Thus the spirit of God produces this evidence and witness in the heart of the believer, that he is born of God, and gives that discerning to him, that it becomes a witness to his spirit, that the spirit of God is in him, and has formed him to holiness, by which he is become a child of God, and has the spirit of a child, disposing him to look to God, as his Almighty Friend and Father. What the Apostle John says, amounts to the same thing, and may serve to illustrate these words of St. Paul. "Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the spirit which he hath given us. Hereby know we, that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his spirit."*

7. The assurance of salvation is not common to all christians; many never attain to it, and few, or none of those who do, have it constantly, without interruption.

This is not promised to all believers in the covenant of grace, as perseverance is; but is given, or withheld, as is most agreeable to infinite wisdom and goodness, and so as to answer the best ends, and be most for the glory of God, the best good of his Church, and of the individual members of it. Assurance is most common among them who are called to distinguished and eminent service and sufferings in the cause of Christ, as they seem to stand in most need of it, to support and animate them, in the midst of the greatest trials, dangers, and worldly evils. Thus, assurance of the love of God, and eternal salvation, seems to have been enjoyed, not only by the Apostles,

* 1 John iii. 24. iv. 13.——See President Edwards, on Religious Affections. First Edition, p. 125—133.

but by chriſtians in general, in their day, as they were called to ſuffering in a peculiar manner and degree, in conſequence of their becoming chriſtians. And thoſe chriſtians who have been called to the greateſt labours and ſufferings, in all ages ſince, have appeared to have, and expreſs, the greateſt aſſurance of their own ſalvation. It has been common for martyrs, to go to the ſtake, or to other moſt cruel deaths, in the joyful aſſurance, that they were going to heaven; as eccleſiaſtical hiſtory abundantly informs us. And in the times of the greateſt ſufferings of the church of Chriſt, chriſtians have appeared to be more generally aſſured of their intereſt in the covenant of grace.

And this can be accounted for, from what has been ſaid above; for they who are called to extraordinary labour and ſuffering in the cauſe of Chriſt, not only need this ſupport, more than others; but their circumſtances are ſuited to awaken their graces, and excite them to a higher and ſtronger degree of exerciſe, than common; by which they have clear evidence, that they have true grace; and God grants his ſpirit to ſuch, in uncommon degrees, which is a witneſs within them, to their ſpirit, that they are the children of God. And often, when chriſtians are on a dying bed, and called to encounter the king of terrors, and feel themſelves going into the inviſible world, they have a greater meaſure of the holy ſpirit, and their faith, and every grace, are in a ſtronger and more ſenſible exerciſe; and they are aſſured that Chriſt is their Saviour, and that they are paſſing into a ſtate of perfect holineſs, happineſs and glory.

There are different degrees of aſſurance, which different perſons may have, or the ſame perſon, at different times. In this imperfect ſtate, none, perhaps, may be properly ſaid to be *perfectly* ſure of their own ſalvation, ſo that there can be no addition to their aſſurance. They

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are not so sure of salvation, as they will be, when they actually arrive to heaven, and find themselves in possession of it; or as *they* are, who are now in heaven. And one christian may properly be said to have a *stronger* assurance than another, and the same believer may have a higher or greater degree of assurance, at one time, than at another, when he may be said to be sure. The disciples of Christ, say to him, upon a particular occasion, "Now are we *sure* that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any one should ask thee: By this we believe that thou camest forth from God."* They believed this before, and were sure that he knew all things; but now their faith, and assurance, were stronger and increased.

Christians who are not assured of their being in a state of grace, but entertain a *hope* of it, may, and actually do, have a stronger hope, or more hope, at one time, than at another, according to the different degrees in which their graces are in exercise, and as different feelings and exercises, in different circumstances, and on different occasions, take place. Sometimes their hope is assaulted with great and overbearing doubts and fears, and they hardly know, whether they have any hope or not; and are ready to conclude against themselves, that all is wrong, with respect to them, and they are really in a graceless state. At other times their hope revives, and is stronger, and their doubts, in a great measure, subside. And one christian differs very much, in this respect, from another. The hope of one is more strong and constant; and he has not so many doubts and fears, respecting his state: Another is generally full of doubts, and his hope is weak, and attended with great diffidence, and does not often rise, so as to expel his fears. This difference, is doubtless owing, in many instances, to the stronger and more

* John xvi. 30.

conſtant exerciſe of chriſtian holineſs in the former; he having more grace, and with greater fervency of ſpirit, lives a watchful, prayerful life, and with more engagedneſs and conſtancy, attends on all the duties of chriſtianity, than the latter.

But it is not always owing to the different degrees of holineſs, that perſons thus differ, in their hopes and confidence, reſpecting their own chriſtian character: But two perſons, who have an equal degree of holineſs, may greatly differ, as to their hope and confidence, of their being real chriſtians. This may ariſe partly, from their natural temper and diſpoſition; partly from other cauſes, ſuch as the manner of their education, and the inſtructions under which they have lived; the habitual way of thinking, to which they have been led, by thoſe with whom they aſſociate; or the miſtakes into which, one or the other has fallen, about the nature and operation of true holineſs: The ſtrong, habitual propenſity of one, to look on the dark ſide, and view and attend moſt to the corruption and evil propenſity of the heart, and leſs to any contrary exerciſes; being inclined to conclude againſt, rather than in favour of himſelf: The other is of a contrary diſpoſition, and looks more on the favourable ſide, and makes the beſt of what he ſees in himſelf, and is not ſo much diſpoſed to give way to doubts and fears, and ſuggeſtions againſt himſelf. Theſe and other things, and circumſtances, may take place and be the cauſe of the difference mentioned, in two perſons equally holy; yea, he who doubts the moſt of his being a real chriſtian, may have more grace than the other, who doubts leſs, ſuppoſing they are both chriſtians, as this difference does not ariſe always, from their different degrees of holineſs, but from other cauſes, ſome of which have been mentioned.

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If he may be called an assured christian, who rises above all doubts or fear, with respect to his being a real christian, perhaps every believer has this assurance, at some seasons in his life, either at his first conversion, or at other times. At least, his mind is so attentive to the truths of the gospel, and he is so pleased and delighted with them, or with some particular truths; and he is so entertained with the divine character, and that of the Redeemer, that he has no doubts or fears about his own state; and perhaps, for a while, thinks little or nothing about himself; and when he does, and reflects on his own views and exercises, he is raised above all doubt, whether he be in a state of grace or not. But these views and exercises may soon vanish, in a great measure, out of sight, and cease to be so strong and sensible; and his doubts may arise in as great strength as ever, and greater; and he call all in question, and greatly fear he has been deluded, and never known what true holiness is.

And whatever be the degree of positive assurance, to which a christian may arise, above a being freed from all doubts and fears, respecting his present state, and future salvation; yet it must be imperfect, as has been observed, and he liable to change, and to lose it, at any moment. The mind of the best christian is not so fixed, but it may fluctuate like the waves of the sea. He is peculiarly favoured by God, indeed, who is enabled to maintain a constant assurance through a course of years, upon good evidence. He must be eminent in grace, and live in the constant, strong exercise of faith and love, and every branch of christian holiness. But we have abundant reason to conclude, this is not generally true of christians. In this imperfect state of temptation and trial, in which the best christians, have so much sin cleaving to them; if they rise at times above all doubts, and have great assurance, it does not commonly continue, uninterrupted,

a long time, but often ſubſides ſoon, and gives place to darkneſs and doubts. It being built on the ſight and knowledge of their holy exerciſes, it muſt change and fail, as they alter, and become leſs viſible and ſenſible, and the ſenſible and ſtrong exerciſe of corruption takes place.

It muſt be obſerved, however, that the chriſtian, through a long courſe of experience, in which, after many doubts reſpecting his ſtate, he has had frequent revivals of his hope, and his doubts have often entirely ſubſided; and his exerciſes of grace have been ſo ſtrong and evident, that he has had a great degree of aſſurance; may hence be led to maintain a more ſteady hope, and not admit doubts of his having true grace, when the exerciſes of it are not ſo viſible and ſenſible, and much of the contrary, appears in his heart. By long experience, he has found, that though his faith and love have, at times, been out of ſight, and contrary exerciſes of heart, have taken place, and appeared, to an awful degree; yet he has, after this, frequently been revived, and his exerciſes of chriſtian grace, have been ſo ſtrong and ſenſible, that all his doubts have vaniſhed. Hence he is more acquainted with the life of a chriſtian, and the nature of ſaving grace; and learns that he may have true grace, though it be not always ſenſibly diſcerned, and little or nothing but contrary exerciſes, are perceived; and ſo does not give way to overbearing doubts, even at ſuch times; but maintains his hope in a more ſteady manner, grounded on his paſt experience. But he cannot, at ſuch ſeaſons, when gracious exerciſes are not actually perceived, and in ſight, be *aſſured*, that he is a chriſtian, and ſhould he continue long in this ſituation, great doubts and fears, muſt ariſe.

8. Every believer would always have aſſurance that he is a chriſtian, and ſhall be ſaved, were it not for the imperfection

imperfection and weakneſs of thoſe exerciſes in which chriſtianity conſiſts, and, which is really the ſame, his ſmall degree of ſpiritual diſcerning; and were there not ſo much ſin, ſtupidity, and ſpiritual blindneſs in his heart.

The holineſs in which chriſtianity conſiſts, is, in the nature of it, diſtinguiſhable from every thing elſe, and tends to diſcover itſelf, in acting according to its own nature. And nothing can prevent a ſight of it, and knowing that it is true holineſs, but want of attention and diſcerning, together with a ſmall degree of it, and that in a great meaſure, hid and buried in the remaining ſinful diſorders of the heart, which render it, in a great degree, ſtupid and blind to the things of the ſpirit of God. The rules and directions in the ſcripture, are plain and abundant, by which, true chriſtian holineſs, is deſcribed in the exerciſes of it, and diſtinguiſhed from every thing, which is not holineſs: And the ſpirit of God, in producing, and maintaining grace in the heart of a chriſtian, bears witneſs, and produces evidence, that he is a child of God; and if it be not diſcerned by his ſpirit, it muſt be for the reaſons juſt mentioned. It therefore follows, that were it not for thoſe things mentioned, which are in the way of it, every chriſtian would have conſtant aſſurance, that he is a believer, and ſhall be ſaved. Were his graces in high and conſtant exerciſe, and acted out in all proper ways; and were his moral corruptions conſequently in a great meaſure ſubdued, and mortified, he could not have a doubt, he muſt be ſure that he is a friend to Chriſt, and does moſt cordially embrace the goſpel; and is intereſted in that everlaſting covenant, that is ordered in all things and ſure.

9. It is the duty of every chriſtian, to have and maintain a conſtant aſſurance that he is a chriſtian, and ſhall be ſaved; and it is, therefore, wholly his fault, for which

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he can have no excuſe, if he be at a loſs, and doubts whether he be a believer in Chriſt, or not.

This follows from what has been obſerved under the laſt head.

For if it be the duty of chriſtians to live in the conſtant, vigorous exerciſe of every grace, and clear diſcerning of ſpiritual things, and mortify all their luſts; with which aſſurance is connected; then it is their duty, conſtantly to have and maintain this aſſurance, and they cannot fail of it, unleſs they come vaſtly ſhort of their duty. It is indeed their duty to be perfectly holy, and every thing ſhort of this, is ſo far ſinful; but the exerciſe of holineſs, which is greatly ſhort of perfection, is ſufficient to aſſure the chriſtian, that he is really holy, and ſhall be ſaved.

It has been obſerved above, that the believer is entirely dependent on God, for every degree of holineſs, and eſpecially for that degree which is neceſſary in order to a well grounded aſſurance. But it cannot be inferred from this, that it is not the duty of chriſtians to be holy to ſuch a degree, as to render them ſure they ſhall be ſaved; unleſs ſuch dependence on God, be inconſiſtent with any poſſible duty, or ſin, which cannot be aſſerted, conſiſtent with reaſon, or the Bible. There is no truth aſſerted more clearly and conſtantly in the holy ſcripture, than theſe two, viz. Man's entire dependence on God for all moral good, or holineſs; and his obligation to be holy, as God is holy; that this is his duty, and all neglect, and every thing in him, contrary to this, is his crime. He who denies either of thoſe, does ſo far renounce the Bible.

IMPROVEMENT.

I. FROM what has been obſerved, on this ſubject, we learn, that they embrace a great and dangerous deluſion, who think they are aſſured of ſalvation, without the leaſt

least evidence, that they are sanctified, in any degree, or looking inwards to find any holy exercise; and that to build such assurance upon our good frames, and holy exercises of heart, is a low, legal way of getting assurance, and is not the proper assurance of a christian. That true christian assurance, is built upon a more firm foundation, upon Christ, and the word and promise of God, and not upon the uncertain and changeable feelings and impressions of the heart.

If the assurance, for which they plead, and which they think they have, be examined, it will appear to be built on a sandy foundation, or rather upon nothing. To whom is Christ a Saviour, and to what are the promises of the gospel made? Christ saves them who believe in him, and them only; and the promises are made to a certain character, to that faith in Christ, which implies all the branches of christian holiness; and to no person who has not this character. And no man can have the least evidence, or reason to believe, that he has an interest in any of the promises of the gospel, or shall be saved by Christ; who has not that holiness which is implied in saving faith, and unless he has evidence of this, in his own mind, by seeing what passes in his own heart, and what are the exercises of that. If assurance of salvation, be not founded upon the knowledge of our own character, it is built upon nothing, and is mere delusion.

II. We learn that no person can have assurance of salvation, from any thing, any circumstance or attainment, which is merely external. Real holiness, or sanctification, is the only evidence that any one can have, that he shall be saved: But this consists in the exercises of the heart, and not in any thing external, any farther than it comes from the heart, and is an expression of what takes place there. Men may make a profession of religion;

ligion; attend on all the ordinances and inſtitutions of Chriſt; and their whole external behaviour may be regular and blameleſs in the ſight of man; they may be juſt and beneficent in their conduct to others; yet if all this do not proceed from a holy diſpoſition and exerciſes of heart, it is no evidence that a man ſhall be ſaved; and conſidered as ſeparate from the heart, there is no real chriſtianity in it. This is decided by the Apoſtle Paul: "Though I ſpeak with the tongues of men and angels; and though I beſtow all my goods to feed the poor; and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing, and I am nothing."* Men muſt be acquainted with their own hearts, and know of what nature their internal exerciſes are, in order to know whether they be chriſtians or not. Indeed, if men think their hearts are right and holy, when their external conduct is not good, regulated by the commands of Chriſt, they deceive themſelves; for though a regular, and good external behaviour, be not any certain evidence of holineſs of heart, yet the want of this, and an irregular external conduct, is a good evidence that the heart is not right.

Too many ſeem to take all the evidence, hope and confidence they have, that they ſhall be ſaved, from ſomething merely external, and foreign from any thing in their hearts; either becauſe God ſmiles upon them, and proſpers them in his providence, or from their attending upon the external duties of religion; their regular external conduct, and the practice of juſtice and beneficence towards their fellow men; and not living in thoſe vices, which many others practice. Such are ſtrangers to true religion, and are wholly deceived in their hopes and expectations of the favour of God. Their character is given by Chriſt, in the Phariſee, who went up to the temple to pray, and ſaid, "God, I thank thee, that

* 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2, 3.

that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjuſt, adulterers, or even as this publican. I faſt twice in a week, I give tithes of all that I poſſeſs."*

A chriſtian may, indeed, have his hope and aſſurance that he does love Chriſt, ſtrengthened by adhering to his duty, and ſteadily obeying him in his external conduct, when called to that which is difficult, and in which he muſt greatly deny himſelf. When his grace is thus tried, and does not fail, it is a farther and confirming evidence, that he is, indeed, a true friend to Chriſt; but in this, the motives and exerciſes of his heart, are not out of the queſtion, or out of view; but are by ſuch trials, brought into view, and his holineſs of heart, ſhines out more bright, and becomes more evident and viſible, not only to others, but to his own conſcience; as gold ſhines more, and proves itſelf to be true gold, by being tried in the fire. Thus Abraham's ready obedience to the divine command, to offer his ſon Iſaac, for a burnt offering, was a confirming evidence that his heart was truly pious. "And the Angel of the Lord, called unto him, out of heaven, and ſaid, Now I know that thou feareſt God, ſeeing thou haſt not withheld thy ſon, thine only ſon, from me."†

III. FROM what has been obſerved on this ſubject, we learn, that they have no true aſſurance of their ſalvation, but are deluded, who ſay they have great and conſtant aſſurance of this, while they live careleſsly, and in many reſpects unbecoming chriſtians. There are ſuch, who do not appear to be conſcientious, humble, meek, watchful and prayerful chriſtians, but the contrary; who often expreſs, with the greateſt confidence, their abſolute aſſurance of their own ſalvation. This is an evidence againſt them, in the view of the judicious, that they do not know what true religion is; and they may reaſonably be

* Luke xviii. 11, 12. † Gen. xxii. 11, 12.

be conſidered, as "Proud boaſters, ſpeaking great ſwelling words of vanity." And ſome ſpeak of their not having a doubt of their being real chriſtians, for a great number of years; but have enjoyed full aſſurance of their ſalvation all that time, in ſuch a manner, and who have appeared to live ſuch lives, as to give reaſon to conclude they know not what true aſſurance is. If a perſon who has lived a life eminently devoted to God, and in the conſtant practice of all the duties of chriſtianity, ſhining externally in good works, and all the graces of our holy religion, ſhould, on proper occaſions, humbly and modeſtly declare to his chriſtian friends, that he was raiſed above all doubts about his ſtate, and had, for a long time, enjoyed full aſſurance of his ſalvation, no one would have reaſon to call it in queſtion. But when they make high pretenſions to this, whoſe lives are in no meaſure anſwerable; and make no proper appearance of living in the conſtant and lively exerciſe of true religion, in a ſtrict, conſciencious, holy walk, they are to be conſidered as poor, miſtaken, deluded creatures.

IV. WE learn that the believer's aſſurance of ſalvation, has no tendency to lead him to live a careleſs, ungodly life, but the contrary. It is not conſiſtent with ſuch a life. It neceſſarily ſuppoſes, ſtrong, lively exerciſes of holineſs, and zeal to live a holy life; and can continue no longer than theſe continue: Whenever his zeal for good works, abates, and is not perceived, and careleſſneſs and ſloth take place, the chriſtian will loſe his aſſurance, in a great degree at leaſt, if he were before aſſured that he was a chriſtian; and doubts will of courſe ariſe. The aſſured chriſtian, therefore, is the moſt lively, holy chriſtian, and moſt engaged to crucify the fleſh with the affections and luſts. And he ſees more clearly than others, or than he did before, the neceſſity

ceſſity of perſevering in this way, not only in order to maintain his aſſurance, but in order to be ſaved; and feels the great and peculiar obligations he is under, to this, and to love Chriſt and keep his commandments, who has loved him, and given himſelf for him; "That he ſhould not hence forward, live unto himſelf, but unto him who died for him and roſe again."* Every aſſured chriſtian, can eſpouſe the language of an eminent ancient chriſtian, who, when he had full aſſurance of ſalvation, ſaid: "I run, *not as uncertainly*: So fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into ſubjection; leſt that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myſelf ſhould be a caſt away."†

V. The doctrine of aſſurance, as it has been now ſtated, and explained, may aſſiſt perſons to determine whether they be believers, or not, and point out the way to obtain aſſurance that they are ſuch.

1. The true believer deſires no aſſurance of his ſalvation, but that which has its foundation in holy exerciſes, and conſiſts in them, ſo that the former cannot be obtained without the latter. Aſſurance of ſalvation would be worth nothing to him, if he could have it, without holineſs, or while he had no ſtronger and more ſenſible exerciſes of love to Chriſt, &c. than he now has. He therefore does not aſk for ſuch aſſurance, nor deſire it. It pleaſes him, that aſſurance cannot be obtained in any other way, than in the lively and ſenſible exerciſe of holy affection.

There are ſome, who earneſtly deſire and long for aſſurance that they ſhall be ſaved, and feel, that if they could obtain this, they ſhould be happy, while holineſs is not ſo much the object of their deſire and purſuit. Theſe are not ſeeking the aſſurance which the chriſtian deſires,

* Gal. ii. 20. 2 Cor. v. 15. † 1 Cor. ix. 26, 27.

desires, nor can it be true assurance, or of any real worth, were it obtained, without holiness. Such assurance will satisfy a selfish person; because, if he can be assured that he shall be happy, he cares for no more; and in his idea of happiness, holiness is not included. But not so the true believer.

2. From the preceding particular, it follows, that the true believer, prizes holiness more than assurance, and is more concerned to obtain the former, than the latter. To be conformed to Christ, and obedient to him in all things, earnestly and constantly devoted to his service and honour, and filled with strong, benevolent love to God, and to man; is a thousand times more the object of his desire, and prayer, than to be assured, that he shall be saved. Therefore, he desires no other assurance of salvation, than that which is implied in such holiness, as has been observed. Indeed, the true christian, in the exercise of holy affection, or disinterested benevolence to God and man, is seeking more important objects, and events, than his own salvation, and they have the first place in his heart. He seeks first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.

On the contrary, the selfish person, desires and seeks his own personal interest, his own happiness, as the most important and supreme good; and if he can be assured of his own happiness, he has all he wants. Therefore, when persons prize and desire assurance of their own salvation, more than holiness, it is a sign that they are not true believers.

3. The true christian, can have joy and peace in believing, or the joy of faith, without assurance of salvation. The reason of this has just now been given, viz. that he desires and seeks, and consequently places his happiness in better, greater and more important objects, than his own salvation. He rejoices in the truth. In the truths contained

contained in divine revelation, in the divine character, in infinite wiſdom, rectitude and goodneſs; in the felicity and glory of God; in the character of Chriſt, and the way of ſalvation for man, by him, &c.

The ſelfiſh perſon, ſeeking nothing but his own intereſt and happineſs, can have no religious comfort and joy, any farther than he thinks himſelf ſure, or hopes that he ſhall be ſaved. Therefore, his religious light and darkneſs, his trouble or comfort, ariſe wholly from, or conſiſt in his fears, that he is no chriſtian, and ſhall not be ſaved; and in his hope and confidence that God loves him, and he ſhall be ſaved. When this appears to be true of any perſon, it is a ſign he is no real chriſtian.

4. The hope and confidence of the true believer, that he is a chriſtian, and ſhall be ſaved, riſes and ſinks, according to the degree of holy exerciſe, in love to God, &c. This has been illuſtrated in this ſection. The hypocrite, can enjoy his aſſurance without any holineſs, or concern about it.

Therefore, the only right way to obtain aſſurance of ſalvation, is to preſs forward in the exerciſe of holineſs, in every branch of it, ſo as to be *ſenſibly* a friend to Chriſt, and devoted to his honour and intereſt.

SECTION XII.

On the Doctrine of Election.

WHAT has been ſaid in the fourth chapter of the firſt part, on the decrees of God, includes and eſtabliſhes the doctrine of particular election; and this doctrine has been ſuppoſed, and in a meaſure brought into view, a

number of times, in the foregoing ſections: But it is thought expedient, and of importance, that it ſhould be more particularly conſidered, explained, and vindicated. And this will be moſt properly done in the chapter on the application of redemption, as this limits the application, and points out the ſubjects to whom it is effectually applied, and who, in the iſſue, receive the whole benefit of redemption.

The doctrine of election imports, that God, in his eternal decree, by which he determined all his works, and fixed every thing, and every event, that ſhall take place to eternity, has choſen a certain number of mankind, to be redeemed, fixing on every particular perſon, whom he will ſave; and giving up the reſt to final impenitence, and endleſs deſtruction.

This doctrine may be explained, and the evidence of the truth of it produced, by attending to the following propoſitions.

I. MANKIND are entirely dependent on God, on his determination, and ſovereign mercy, for ſalvation. All creatures depend on God for all the good they have.—Their exiſtence, and all their enjoyments, are the fruit of his determination and appointment, which has made the difference between one and another, in every reſpect. But man is, in a peculiar ſenſe and degree, dependent on the ſovereign will and pleaſure of God, for ſalvation. He is utterly *loſt* in ſin; not only infinitely guilty, and deſerving to be deſtroyed forever; but wholly inclined to rebellion, and fixed in a diſpoſition to oppoſe God, in every method he can take, to recover and ſave him, unleſs his heart be renewed by almighty power and grace; to which favour, none have the leaſt claim, or can have, but are infinitely unworthy of it. And when the way was opened for the pardon and ſalvation of ſinful man,

man, by what the Mediator had done and ſuffered, conſiſtent with the divine law and righteouſneſs; yet none could be ſaved, unleſs they be renewed by the ſpirit of God, and made willing in the day of his power. This therefore depends on the determination and purpoſe of God; and he "has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth." God being under no obligation to ſave any one of mankind, it muſt depend on his ſovereign will, whether any ſhould be ſaved: And if any, whether all, or only a part of mankind: And if only ſome of them, how many, and the particular perſons that ſhould be the ſubjects of this favour. This muſt be determined by God; for there is no other being that has a right to determine it, or that can do it; and it is impoſſible that God ſhould not determine it. He is infinitely powerful and wiſe, he knew what was beſt to be done, and it wholly depended on him to determine and do, that which is on the whole, wiſeſt and beſt. It belonged to him to decide and fix every thing reſpecting this matter, "who worketh all things according to the counſel of his own will."

II. IT is infinitely beſt, and moſt deſirable, that this ſhould be determined by God. He only is infinitely wiſe and good; therefore, whatever he determines ſhall be done, and take place, is perfectly right, moſt wiſe and beſt. It is therefore, infinitely deſirable, that he ſhould order ever thing that takes place, and all events; but more eſpecially thoſe things that relate to the eternal exiſtence and endleſs happineſs or miſery of man, whether any ſhall be ſaved, or all loſt; and if only a part of mankind be ſaved, how many, and what particular perſons, ſhall be included in this number. This is a matter of great importance, and not of indifference, whether this perſon ſhall be ſaved, rather than another, and it requires infinite wiſdom to determine it right, ſo as to anſwer the beſt ends. Were any creature to determine it, in any

one inſtance, eſpecially, apoſtate man, the event might be undeſirable, and of infinitely evil conſequence. Were man to decide it, independent of God, and were this poſſible, it would be moſt undeſirable and infinitely dreadful to the wiſe and good; and they rejoice that this important affair, with all others, is in the hand of him who is infinitely wiſe and good; who has a right, and to whom it belongs to decide the ſtate of every man, whether he ſhall be ſaved, or not; and that he has done it, by an unalterable decree.

III. IT is certain from the ſcripture, that God has determined not to ſave all mankind; but only a part, and a particular number of them. The Redeemer himſelf has declared this expreſsly, and it is abundantly aſſerted in the Old Teſtament, and in the New. A number are to go away into everlaſting puniſhment, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is unquenchable: And the ſmoke of their torment, ſhall aſcend up forever and ever, &c. &c.* Had not God revealed this, it could not have been known what would be the event of redemption, whether all will be ſaved, or not: But God has made it known.

We are not told in the ſcripture, the preciſe number that ſhall be ſaved; nor what proportion of mankind will be of this number; but from what is revealed, reſpecting this matter, it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that many more will be ſaved, than loſt, perhaps ſome thouſands to one.† But, be this as it may, we are certain that the number that ſhall be ſaved, is fixed, by infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, and every one of theſe is known unto

* This has been particularly conſidered, and proved, by a number of authors. See Dr. Edwards, againſt Dr. Chauncy. And an Inquiry concerning the Future State of thoſe who Die in their Sins.

† See Dr. Bellamy, on the Millennium. And the forementioned Inquiry. Page 167, &c.

unto God, and their names are written in the book of life, before the foundation of the world. We are alſo certain, that it is not owing to the want of goodneſs in God, or the inſufficiency of the atonement and merit of Chriſt, that all mankind are not ſaved; for the latter is as ſufficient to ſave the whole human race, as part of them, or one individual; and the only reaſon why all are not ſaved, is, becauſe it is inconſiſtent with infinite wiſdom and goodneſs; that is, it is not for the greateſt general good. Infinite goodneſs, in all caſes, and forever, oppoſes and forbids that to take place, which is not for the greateſt general good, be that what it may; and approves and effects that which will anſwer the beſt ends, and produce the greateſt good, in all caſes. We are as certain of this, as we can be, that there is an infinitely wiſe, good, and omnipotent Being. Therefore, ſince God has declared, that he has determined, not to ſave all mankind, we know that this is not conſiſtent with his goodneſs; that is, that it is not wiſeſt and beſt, or, which is the ſame, it is not for the greateſt good of the whole, that all ſhould be ſaved. God, does not delight in the deſtruction of ſinners, in itſelf conſidered, or for its own ſake; and not one would be ſuffered to periſh, if it were conſiſtent with wiſdom and goodneſs, to ſave them all; or if this were conſiſtent with the glory of God, or the greateſt good of the univerſe. Nothing can be more certain, than that all will be ſaved, that can be ſaved by omnipotence, clothed with infinite wiſdom and goodneſs; that is, that can be ſaved conſiſtent with theſe.—What is inconſiſtent with infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, cannot be done by a Being infinitely wiſe and good, though omnipotent. It is *morally impoſſible*; for he cannot deny himſelf, and act contrary to wiſdom and goodneſs. Any man may be abſolutely ſure that he ſhall be ſaved, if it be not inconſiſtent with the goodneſs of God, to ſave him, and,

in this ſenſe, impoſſible; or if it be conſiſtent with the greateſt glory of God, or the general good. And who, in his ſenſes; that is, who that is wiſe and benevolent, would deſire to be ſaved, or could aſk for the ſalvation of any of his fellow men, unleſs this might be conſiſtent with the glory of God, and the greateſt good of the univerſe?

As we know not what number of mankind can be ſaved, conſiſtent with infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, ſo we are utterly incapable of judging, what particular perſons can be ſaved, conſiſtent with theſe: But God has determined this, without a poſſibility of any miſtake. He knows what individuals of the human race can be ſaved, conſiſtent with his glory, and the greateſt good of his eternal kingdom; and who cannot be ſaved conſiſtent with this, and has determined, and does act accordingly. In this he acts as a ſovereign, as being under obligation to none, or not to one, more than to another; but not arbitrarily, without any wiſdom or reaſon. There is a good reaſon, why one ſhould be ſaved rather than another. There is a good reaſon, why every one of thoſe ſhould be ſaved, who are, or ſhall be ſaved; and why every one of the reſt ſhould not be ſaved; from the different natural formation, or capacity, or the different circumſtances, to us unknown, and undeſcribable, which render it wiſeſt and beſt, moſt for the glory of God, and the good of his kingdom, that the former ſhould be ſaved, and the latter loſt. This difference in circumſtances, &c. originates in the divine decree, and is ordered by God, according to the infinitely wiſe counſel of his own will; but it is as real a difference, as if it had not this origin.

IV. WE learn from the holy ſcriptures, that a particular number of individuals are choſen from among mankind,

kind, on whom the divine love and ſovereign grace are to be diſplayed, in their ſalvation.

Reaſon teaches us, that this muſt be ſo, as has been obſerved; for it muſt be determined by God, and he makes the diſtinction between thoſe who are ſaved, and thoſe who are loſt, as it cannot be done by any one elſe; and if it were poſſible, not to be determined by infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, it would be infinitely diſagreeable and dreadful to all the wiſe and good: And God determines all his works, all he will do from eternity. Accordingly the ſcripture aſſerts this moſt expreſsly and abundantly, in the following paſſages, and in many others, which it will be needleſs to mention. The Redeemer often ſpeaks of thoſe who were given to him by the Father, to be reedeemed and ſaved, as being a number ſelected from the reſt of mankind; and ſays they ſhall come to him, and he will keep and ſave them; and his words ſtrongly imply, that they only ſhall be ſaved; and that there never was a deſign to ſave any, but thoſe who are thus ſelected and choſen, and given to him, to be ſaved by him. Therefore he declares, that he does not pray for the ſalvation of any, except theſe elect ones, who were given to him. He ſays, "All that the Father *giveth me*, ſhall come to me: And him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out. And this is the Father's will which hath ſent me, *that of all which he hath given me*, I ſhould loſe nothing, but ſhould raiſe it up again at the laſt day."* "I lay down my life for the ſheep. And other ſheep I have which are not of this fold: Them alſo I muſt bring, and they ſhall hear my voice; and there ſhall be one fold, and one ſhepherd. My ſheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father,

* John vi. 37, 39.

ther, *which gave them to me*, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."* "Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee; as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life *to as many as thou hast given him*. I pray not for the world; *but for them which thou hast given me*, for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. Holy Father, keep through thine own name, *those whom thou hast given me*, that they may be one as we are. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me."† Could the doctrine of election be expressed more fully and in a stronger manner, by any words whatever? That a particular number of mankind, with every individual of that number, are chosen and selected from the rest, and in the covenant of redemption given to Christ, to be redeemed and saved by him; and that, these alone are to be saved? Agreeably to this, Christ repeatedly speaks of the *elect*, whose salvation is secured; and for whose sake, he orders the great events in the world. "And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: But for the *elect's sake, whom he hath chosen*, he hath shortened the days. For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, *if it were possible, even the very elect*. And then he shall send his angels, and shall gather together *his elect*, from the four winds."‡

The Apostle Paul, represents the salvation of the redeemed, as originating in the eternal purpose of God, by which they are selected from others; and who, in consequence of this choice and appointment, are saved. "We know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called, *according*

* John x. 15, 16. 27, 28, 29. † John xvii. 1, 2. 9, 10, 11. 21.
‡ Mark xiii. 20, 22, 27.

ing to his purpoſe. For whom he did *foreknow*, (that is, whom he fixed upon, and choſe to ſalvation,) he alſo did predeſtinate, to be conformed to the image of his Son. Moreover, whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called: And whom he called, them he alſo juſtified: And whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified. Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's *elect*: It is God that juſtifieth."* "For the children not being yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpoſe of God, according to election, might ſtand, not of works, but of him who calleth. For he ſaith to Moſes, I will have mercy, on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compaſſion on whom I will have compaſſion. Therefore, he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth."†

The doctrine of election, as ſtated above, is implied in theſe laſt words, and they are ſufficient to prove it, were there nothing more ſaid of it in the Bible: For if the will of God determines who ſhall be the ſubjects of divine mercy, and be ſaved, and who ſhall not; as is here aſſerted; then God determined from eternity, whom he would ſave, and whom he would not ſave, and fixed upon, and choſe a particular number of perſons, to be the ſubjects of his mercy, in their ſalvation, excluſive of the reſt of mankind; for what God wills to do, he does not begin to will to do it, in time; but his determinations and will, reſpecting all his works, are without beginning: His will is unchangeable. "He is of one mind, and none can turn him."

This Apoſtle, brings the doctrine of election again into view, and moſt expreſsly aſſerts it, in the following words, "God hath not caſt away his people which he *foreknew*.‡

Even

* Rom. viii. 28, 29, 30, 33. † Chap. ix. 11, 15, 18.

‡ The foreknowledge of God, is mentioned here, and in other places, as implying his purpoſe and decree of election. See Acts ii. 23. xv. 18. Rom. viii. 29. 1 Peter i. 2. The reaſon why this word is uſed to denote the

Even ſo then, at this preſent time alſo, there is a remnant, *according to the election of grace.* What then?—Iſrael hath not obtained that which he ſeeketh for; *but the election hath obtained it*, and the reſt were blinded."*—And in his letter to the ſaints at Epheſus, he conſiders their election, or being choſen by God, before the foundation of the world; that is, from eternity, by his eternal purpoſe and decree, as the ſource and cauſe of their becoming chriſtians, and of their ſalvation. "Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings, in heavenly places, in Chriſt. *According as he hath choſen us in him, before the foundation of the world*, that we ſhould be holy and without blame before him in love. Having predeſtinated us unto the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt to himſelf, according to the good pleaſure of his will."†—He ſpeaks the ſame language in his letter to Timothy. "Who hath ſaved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpoſe and grace, which was given to us in Chriſt Jeſus, before the world began."‡ He alſo ſays, "Therefore I endure all things *for the ſake of the elect*, that they may obtain the ſalvation which is in Chriſt Jeſus, with eternal glory."§ The Apoſtle had no expectation or deſire of the ſalvation of any but the *elect*, whom God hath choſen to ſalvation, from eternity. Therefore, when he had evidence that any perſon was a true believer and made holy,

the divine determination, is becauſe the foreknowledge of God, does neceſſarily imply his purpoſe or decree, with reſpect to the thing foreknown; for God foreknows what will be, only by determining what ſhall be. Therefore, foreknowledge and decrees cannot be ſeparated; for they imply each other, if they be not one and the ſame. "Grotius, as well as Beza, obſerves, that προγνωσις muſt here ſignify *decree*; and Elſner has ſhown, it has that ſignification in approved Greek writers."—Doddridge's Note on Acts ii. 23.

* Chap. xi. 2, 5, 7. † Eph. i. 3, 4, 5.
‡ 2 Tim. i. 9. § Chap. ii. 10.

holy, he conſidered it as the conſequence and fruit of election, of his being choſen by God, from the beginning, that is, from eternity. This is his language to the chriſtians at Theſſalonica. "We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, *becauſe God hath from the beginning choſen you to ſalvation*, through ſanctification of the ſpirit, and belief of the truth."*

The Apoſtle Peter ſets this matter in the ſame light with Paul, and conſiders true chriſtians, as elected to this privilege, and to eternal life, by the counſel and purpoſe of God, as the origin and foundation of all this good to them. "Peter, an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, to the ſtrangers ſcattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Aſſia, and Bithynia, *Elect* according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through ſanctification of the ſpirit, unto obedience, and ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt."†

Whoever well conſiders theſe paſſages of ſcripture, with others of the ſame tenor, and obſerves how conſiſtent this doctrine is with the whole of the ſcripture, which repreſents man as loſt in ſin, and wholly dependent on God for ſalvation; and therefore, that their ſalvation muſt all originate in the ſovereign purpoſe and grace of God; and how conſiſtent this is with reaſon, and that it is indeed, impoſſible, it ſhould be otherwiſe: Whoever takes a proper view of all this, muſt believe, and reſt ſatisfied in the truth, that all the redeemed were choſen to ſalvation, by the eternal purpoſe of God, as the origin and foundation of their ſalvation; and that they who are not thus elected, do periſh in their ſins. And he who does not ſee this doctrine plainly revealed in the Bible, muſt be ſuppoſed to read it with ſtrong prejudices againſt the truth, or with very wrong and falſe conceptions.

* 2 Theſſ. ii. 13. † 1 Pet. i. 1, 2.

tions reſpecting the ſubject. To obviate and remove theſe, is the deſign of ſome part of the following.

V. THE elect are not choſen to ſalvation, rather than others, becauſe of any moral excellence in them, or out of reſpect to any foreſeen faith and repentance; or becauſe their moral character is in any reſpect better than others. The difference between them and others, in this reſpect, whenever it takes place, is the fruit and conſequence of their election, and not the ground and reaſon of it. All mankind are totally ſinful, wholly loſt and undone, in themſelves, infinitely guilty and ill-deſerving. And all muſt periſh forever, were it not for electing grace; were they not ſelected from the reſt, and given to the Redeemer, to be ſaved by him, and ſo made veſſels of mercy, prepared unto glory. This is abundantly declared in ſcripture. This is ſtrongly aſſerted in a paſſage which has been mentioned. "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpoſe of God, according to election, might ſtand, *not of works*, but of him that calleth." In their election, they are predeſtinated to be conformed to Chriſt, in true holineſs, and not becauſe it is foreſeen they will, of their own accord, be holy, and are choſen to ſalvation for the ſake of this. They are elected, through ſanctification of the ſpirit *unto obedience*. Sanctification and obedience, are the conſequence of their election, and the privilege to which they are choſen; and not that out of regard to which they are choſen to ſalvation. The Apoſtle tells the elect at Epheſus, that electing love found them dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, as ſinful as others, and as much the children of wrath. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in ſins, hath quickened us together with Chriſt. By grace are ye ſaved, through faith;

faith; and that not of yourſelves, it is the gift of God. *Not of works*, leſt any man ſhould boaſt. For we are his workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus, unto good works, which God hath *before ordained*, that we ſhould walk in them."* Election is a doctrine of grace; it is therefore called "The election of grace." "Even ſo then at this preſent time alſo, there is a remnant *according to the election of grace*. And if by grace, then it is no more of works: Otherwiſe grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: Otherwiſe work is no more work."†

VI. THE elect are not choſen to ſalvation, without holineſs and obedience, or whether they be holy, and obey Chriſt, or not. This is aſſerted in the paſſages which have been quoted. Thoſe who are choſen to ſalvation, are predeſtinated, or ordained, to be conformed to Chriſt. They are elected to ſalvation, through ſanctification of the ſpirit, unto obedience. Holineſs, is part of the ſalvation to which they are elected, and they cannot be ſaved without it, which conſiſts in activity and obedience. Therefore, no perſon can have any evidence that he is elected, in any other way, but by making it evident that he is holy and obedient.

This therefore detects the great miſtake and deluſion, in which they are, who ſay, if they be elected, they ſhall be ſaved, let them do what they will, and live and die in a courſe of allowed ſin. No propoſition can be more falſe than this: It is as contrary to the truth, as it would be for a man to ſay, if it be appointed that I ſhould live ſeven years, I ſhall live, though I die tomorrow. Or if it be appointed that I ſhall go to ſuch a city, I ſhall go, though I do not go, and never move out of the place in which I now am.

This

* Eph. ii. 1—10. † Rom. xi. 5, 6.

This doctrine, therefore, affords no encouragement to ſin, or to be indifferent and careleſs about holineſs, obedience and ſavation: For this is as certainly the road to hell, if continued in, as if there were none elected to ſalvation; and holineſs, and care, watchfulneſs, and diligence, in active obedience, are as reaſonable, important, and neceſſary, as if this doctrine were not true.

VII. THE uſe of proper means, is as neceſſary, in order to the ſalvation of the elect, as it would be, were none elected to ſalvation. As none are elected to ſalvation, without holineſs, or whether they be holy or not, becauſe this is a contradiction, and impoſſible; ſo none can exerciſe holineſs, and be obedient, without means; for this is as great a contradiction as the other; for it is the ſame, as to ſuppoſe that a perſon may be holy and obedient, without knowledge, attention, and activity; or without holineſs and obedience. Means are as neceſſary, in order to convert and ſave the elect, and their perſevering in holineſs, as they would be if they were not elected.

This is illuſtrated in the ſtory of the ſhipwreck of Paul, and thoſe with him. They were all elected to be ſaved from being loſt at ſea, and to arrive ſafe on ſhore. God had determined this in their favour, and revealed it to Paul, and he had publiſhed it to them who were with him in the ſhip. Yet when the ſeamen were about to leave the ſhip, who only had ſkill to manage it, "Paul ſaid to the Centurion, and to the ſoldiers, except theſe abide in the ſhip, ye cannot be ſaved."* They were elected to that ſalvation, and it was hereby made ſure to them; but this did not render means, and their activity uſeleſs, for they were elected to be ſaved in this way, and in no other; and therefore, their ſalvation was not poſſible in any other way. And if the Centurion had ſaid to Paul, "If we are elected to be ſaved, though the ſeamen

* Acts xxvii. 31.

ſeamen leave the ſhip, or if we uſe no means to get to the land, and take no care or thought about it, and though every one of us do what he can, or what he pleaſe, to drown himſelf, and all the reſt," he would have ſpoken contrary to reaſon and truth.

And there is as much encouragement to uſe means for the ſalvation of ſinners, as if there were none elected to ſalvation, and much more: For there would indeed be no encouragement to uſe any means, or to do any thing, for the ſalvation of any one, if none were elected to be ſaved: For if that were true, there would be no ſalvation for any. St. Paul, therefore, took his encouragement to travel round the world and preach, and go through great labours and ſufferings, from the doctrine of election, that he might be the means of ſaving ſome of the elect. He ſays, "Therefore, I endure all things for the ſake of the *elect*, that they may obtain the ſalvation which is in Chriſt Jeſus."* And the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, encouraged him to perſevere in preaching at Corinth, becauſe he had much people in that city; that is, there were many elected to ſalvation in that city.† And there would be no reaſon or encouragement for any perſon to uſe any means, or do any thing, in order to be ſaved, if none were elected to ſalvation.

VIII. THE doctrine of election, as it has been ſtated, does not repreſent God as *a reſpecter of perſons*, as ſome have ſuppoſed.

To have reſpect to perſons, is to regard and treat them differently, on the account of ſome ſuppoſed or real difference in them or their circumſtances, which is no real ground or good reaſon of ſuch different regard and treatment. As when a judge regards, juſtifies and rewards, one, rather than another, becauſe he is rich and the other poor,

* 2 Tim. ii. 10. † Acts xviii. 9, 10.

poor, or has given him a bribe, or is a near relation of his, or his particular friend; when the other is as really worthy of regard, and his cauſe more juſt. This character, of a reſpecter of perſons, belongs rather to a judge, or one who is to regard and reward others, according to their different characters, which are the real ground, and a good reaſon of making a difference. And is not applicable to a benefactor, in his granting favours, and free, undeſerved gifts, to one, rather than another, where there is no deſert of ſuch favour, in one more than another; and the favour is not granted under any ſuch notion or pretence. The benefactor, in this caſe, has a right to do what he will with his own, and beſtow his gifts in ſuch a manner, and on ſuch perſons, as will beſt promote his own benevolent purpoſes, and the general good. And he who is neglected, and does not receive any favour, as he has no claim to any, has no reaſon to complain. This leads to obſerve,

IX. No injury is done to thoſe who are not elected, by the election of others to ſalvation. No one of mankind has any deſert of the leaſt favour; but all the human race might juſtly have been left in a ſtate of ruin, to be loſt and miſerable forever, and no injury would have been done to any. In this caſe, the ſhowing favour to one, and ſaving him, is no injury to the other, who has no favour, and is left to periſh; he deſerves this as much as if none were ſaved, and his caſe is not rendered the worſe, in any reſpect, merely becauſe others do not ſuffer with him, who deſerve it as much as he does. And if the actually making this difference, and ſaving ſome, and leaving others to periſh, be no injury to the latter, and they have no cauſe to complain, any more than if others periſhed with them; then the determination to do this, and electing ſome to ſalvation from eterni-

ty,

ty, and not electing all, is in no respect injurious to the nonelect, and is no ground of complaint. If a king, pardon a certain number of those criminals who are justly condemned to be put to death, and give the rest up to be executed, they all, equally deserving to die, he does no injury to the latter; they deserve to die as much, and their execution is as just, as if all were put to death. Mercy being showed to others, gives them no claim to it, and they have no cause of complaint, that the same undeserved favour is not showed to them. And it alters not the case, though the king had determined long before it took place, to save some of the criminals alive, and fixed on the individuals, on whom he would bestow this favour, in distinction from the rest.

X. SALVATION may be offered to all men, though only a certain number of them are chosen to salvation, and will be finally saved.

It is not necessary that all should certainly be saved, and that this should be known to be the event of making the offer of salvation to men, in order to make the offer of it to them, with propriety. Men may have the offer of salvation, or of any other good thing, though they refuse to accept of it, and so never obtain it. This, it is presumed, none will deny.

Salvation may be offered to men, though it be certain, and known to God who makes the offer, that they will reject it, and so never be saved. If salvation may be offered to men, though they refuse to accept of it, and their rejecting it be not inconsistent with the offer being made, or their having the offer; then such offer may be made, though it be known, and certain, that they will reject it, and perish; for this being *known*, does not alter the case with respect to the offer; it is as really made, and as really rejected, as if it were not known, but it were

wholly uncertain what the event would be. A rich man may offer an eſtate to a poor man, though he be certain that he will reject the offer, and die in poverty, as the conſequence of his refuſal to accept of the favour which is offered.

And if the offer of ſalvation may be truly and properly made, when it is known to him who makes the offer that it will be rejected; then it may be ſo made and rejected, though the knowledge of this imply the divine purpoſe and decree, reſpecting the matter, or be founded upon it. The ſinner is diſpoſed to reject the offer of ſalvation, and will certainly reject it, unleſs his heart be renewed by the ſpirit of God: But he being under no obligation to the ſinner to do this, in any inſtance; and his making the offer of ſalvation does not lay him under any ſuch obligation, or infer it; he may determine not to do it, by which it is certain, the ſinner will not accept of it, and be ſaved. Notwithſtanding this, the offer is really made, and the ſinner really rejects it, and is as voluntary and criminal, as if nothing were determined and foreknown, reſpecting the event. Though God have power to renew every ſinner's heart to whom the goſpel is preached, and bring them all to embrace the goſpel, and be ſaved; yet he has determined not to do it: And his making the offer of ſalvation, does not imply that he will do it.

Though a rich man offer an eſtate to one that is poor, and it is in his power by ſome extraordinary means and exertions to purſuade him to accept it: Yet his making the offer lays him under no obligation to effect it, though he know the conſequence will be his rejecting it, and dying in poverty. He may have good reaſon not to make thoſe extraordinary exertions, and yet be ſincere in the offer, on condition he is willing to accept it; and the poor man has the eſtate really offered to him, and

he

he as really rejects it, and is as fooliſh and criminal in doing it, and as juſtly ſuffers the evil conſequence, as if the rich man knew not what would be the conſequence of making the offer, whether it would be rejected or not; and had no power by any means, to perſuade him, and make him willing to accept of it.

It is wiſe and important, that ſalvation by Chriſt ſhould be offered indiſcriminately to all, in the publiſhing and preaching of the goſpel, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. It has been obſerved, that the goſpel cannot be preached to any, to whom the offer of ſalvation is not made, upon their acceptance of it. They who will comply with the offer, or the elect, who ſhall come to Chriſt, live promiſcuouſly, intermixed with others; and are not to be diſtinguiſhed by men from others, until they have the goſpel preached to them, and thereby ſalvation is offered to them, and they believe and embrace the offer. Therefore, the goſpel cannot be preached to them, unleſs it be preached to all. And, as it may be properly preached to all, and ſalvation be really offered to every one, whether he will accept of it, or not; and the proviſion made for the ſalvation of ſinners in the goſpel, is as ſufficient for one as another, and it is offered as a free gift, to every one who believeth, or will receive it: And none can fail of ſalvation, and periſh under the goſpel, but by conſtantly rejecting it to the end of life. Therefore, it is important and neceſſary, that this offer ſhould be made to all, without any diſtinction, in order to the ſalvation of any, even the elect. Beſides, this is neceſſary in order to ſet in the cleareſt light, and even to diſcover, the following important truths.

1. That mankind are ſo fixed in their rebellion, and ſuch obſtinate oppoſers and enemies of God, and all moral good, that they are diſpoſed conſtantly, and with all their hearts, to reject mercy and ſalvation, though

freely offered to them. Nothing is, or perhaps can be, more ſuited, effectually to bring out and diſcover the exceeding wickedneſs and obſtinacy of the heart of man, than this. It is of great importance, that a clear and full diſcovery of this ſhould be made, in order to manifeſt to their conſciences, and to all, the juſtice and propriety of the awful ſentence which will be pronounced againſt the wicked at the laſt day.

2. That every one who fails of ſalvation under the goſpel, periſhes by his own fault and aggravated wickedneſs, obſtinately perſiſted in through life: And muſt aſcribe his loſs of eternal life, and his falling into endleſs deſtruction, wholly to his own folly, and conſtant voluntary rejecting ſalvation, freely offered to him: That he has *deſtroyed himſelf*, and nothing could have prevented his ſalvation, and have brought endleſs deſtruction upon him; no decree of heaven, nor ſatan, nor any of his fellow men; nor his outward circumſtances; poverty or riches; honours and high ſtations; or a mean and low condition in the world; health or ſickneſs; or any temptation and trying ſituation in life whatſoever; had he not with all his heart rejected the goſpel, and conſtantly, through his whole life, refuſed to accept of the ſalvation which was offered to him; for which folly and ſin he has not the leaſt poſſible excuſe.

This coincides with the preceding particular, and ſerves to ſhow, how important and neceſſary it is, that they who periſh from under the goſpel, ſhould have ſalvation offered to them, as by this it will appear more clearly, than otherwiſe it could, that ſinners periſh by their own fault, and can lay the blame of it to none but themſelves; and that they are juſtly caſt into endleſs deſtruction, however infinitely awful and dreadful it be.

And this will ſerve effectually to confute an aſſertion which many now make, and ſhow the falſehood

of

of it, viz. that *if they be not elected, they muſt be damned, whatever they may do.* It will appear, when the real truth comes to light, that they periſh by rejecting the ſalvation offered to them; and that if they had believed, and been willing to be ſaved by Chriſt, they would not have been loſt. Their deſtruction is the conſequence of their great, inexcuſable wickedneſs, in ſlighting Chriſt, and neglecting the great ſalvation; by which they have brought it on themſelves; which could not have come upon them, had they not done this; but accepted of the kind offer which they had.

3. The offer of ſalvation to all, ſerves more clearly to diſplay and diſcover to the redeemed, than otherwiſe could have been, the riches of that ſovereign grace, by which they are ſaved. It is of great importance, that this ſhould be ſeen by the redeemed, in the cleareſt light, and to the beſt advantage, that God may have the glory of it, and they the greateſt benefit poſſible. While they ſee others periſh under the ſame advantages which they have enjoyed; they ſee what they ſhould have done, had they not been diſtinguiſhed by ſovereign grace, and made willing in the day of divine power. They ſee the human heart acted out in the unbeliever, and the awful conſequence in his periſhing; and know this would have been their caſe, had not God created in them a new heart, and given them to believe on Chriſt, in conſequence of his electing love. They ſee this, and give all the glory to ſovereign grace, and in a greater degree, are happy in the enjoyment of the love of God. St. Paul was ſenſible of the importance of chriſtians ſeeing and enjoying the great and diſtinguiſhing love of God to them; and of their giving all the glory to him; and therefore, labours to ſet this in the ſtrongeſt light, in the two firſt chapters of his letter to the church at Epheſus,

as he alſo does in moſt of his other epiſtles, which the attentive reader of the Bible muſt have obſerved.

That the offer of ſalvation is in fact made to all to whom the goſpel is revealed, has been before proved.* And it may be added here, to the evidence there produced, that if there were no other proof of this, but the parables of Chriſt, recorded in Math. xxii. and Luke xiv. theſe are ſufficient to put it beyond diſpute. There our Saviour repreſents the goſpel, by a feaſt which is made, to which numbers are invited, who refuſe to come, and conſequently never taſte of the ſupper. The invitation is, "Come to the feaſt, come to the marriage, for all things are ready." How can this repreſent the goſpel, if ſalvation be not offered to thoſe who never accept of the offer? But to return; ſalvation is in fact, offered to all, wherever the goſpel is publiſhed. Some have ſuppoſed this to be inconſiſtent with the doctrine of election, as it has been ſtated; but it is hoped, that what has been offered, has ſufficiently proved that they are both conſiſtent with each other.

XI. THE doctrine of election, is ſo far from being a diſcouraging doctrine, that it affords the only ground of all true encouragement and hope.

Many have been ſo groſsly miſtaken, as to think this a gloomy, diſcouraging doctrine, and that it tends to lead perſons to deſpair; whereas, it is the only well grounded ſupport againſt deſpair, and the ſole foundation of all reaſonable hope of ſalvation. It does indeed, tend to cut off all *their* hopes of ſalvation, who build them upon themſelves, their own good diſpoſition, will and exertions, independent of God; ſuppoſing they ſhall determine it in their own favour, and, in this ſenſe, ſave themſelves. The doctrine of election, demoliſhes this foundation, and deſtroys ſuch a hope; as it teaches, that man is abſolutely dependent

* See Part II. Sect. VIII. Page 105, &c.

dependent on God for his ſalvation, and *he* muſt determine whether he ſhall be ſaved or not. As this, therefore, is a falſe hope, and dangerous deluſion, it is deſirable it ſhould be deſtroyed; and it affords an argument in favour of this doctrine, that it tends to take away all ſuch hope from man.

When perſons are brought to know themſelves, in ſome meaſure, and ſee how guilty and loſt they are, how ſinful and obſtinate their hearts are, being wholly corrupt, and ſo ſtrongly indiſpoſed to any thing that is right, and inclined to evil, that if left to themſelves, they never ſhall repent and embrace the goſpel, but ſhall go on to certain deſtruction: Therefore, if God, who has mercy on whom he will have mercy, have not determined in their favour, that he will give them a new heart, and ſave them by the waſhing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt, they ſhall not be ſaved, but be certainly loſt forever. They deſpair of diſtinguiſhing themſelves, ſo as to render themſelves more deſerving of the favour of God, and of ſalvation, or leſs illdeſerving, than others. They know of no greater ſinners than themſelves, or more deſerving of endleſs deſtruction, or farther from embracing the goſpel, than they are, and always ſhall be, if left to themſelves. Their only hope therefore, is in the revealed purpoſe of God to ſave ſome of mankind, without any regard to their deſert of it, or their diſtinguiſhing themſelves from others, not being ſo great ſinners, or being leſs unworthy; but has mercy on whom he will have mercy: And they have no reaſon to conclude, they are not of this number; but may hope they are elected to ſalvation, though utterly loſt in themſelves, and the moſt guilty and vile of all others.

It is true, that ſome have abuſed this doctrine, and improved it to bad purpoſes to themſelves, through their ignorance, the perverſeneſs of their own hearts, and the cunning

cunning agency of ſatan, the deceiver. They have not been willing to be in the hand of God, and wholly dependent on him; and the thought that they are ſo, has irritated and galled their ſpirits; they have been ſuch enemies to God, that they have concluded he will decide againſt them, if it be left to him to determine, whether they ſhall be ſaved or not; and knowing they have greatly offended him, they conclude they are not among the number of the elect, and ſo ſink into deſpair. It is not the doctrine of election, or the belief of it, which produces this deſpair, or has any tendency to it; but the oppoſition of the heart to it, and drawing a wrong and falſe concluſion from it: For this doctrine has a direct contrary tendency and effect, when properly improved, as has been ſhown.

XII. THE doctrine of election, is perfectly conſiſtent with the greateſt poſſible degree of human liberty.

This has been particularly conſidered, in the chapter upon the Decrees of God, and need not be repeated here. Many have entertained ſuch wrong notions of this doctrine, and of liberty, or the freedom of the will, as to ſuppoſe, if this were true, the nonelect are chained down to deſtruction; and the elect fixed in a ſtate of ſalvation, inconſiſtent with their exerciſing any freedom of choice. The divine purpoſe of election, does not affect the liberty of any man, unleſs the certainty of events be inconſiſtent with it. It is certain it is not, if liberty conſiſts in acting voluntarily, or in volition; which it is preſumed, has been proved; and that there can be no other or higher liberty in nature. The elect are perfectly free, in embracing the goſpel, and in all their exerciſes, and in every ſtep they take, in order to obtain complete ſalvation. This is neceſſarily ſuppoſed in their election to eternal life; for they can be ſaved in no other way, but by

by their free choice, which is, therefore, ſecured in their election, that they ſhall go to heaven by their own free conſent, in the full exerciſe of perfect liberty, in oppoſition to any compulſion. Whatever God decrees or does, reſpecting their ſalvation, does not interfere with their freedom; but infallibly ſecures and eſtabliſhes it.—*He worketh in them, to will and to do*: Therefore, does nothing inconſiſtent with their willing and doing, but promotes and effects it; in which all their freedom and moral agency conſiſt.

The non elect, go to deſtruction by their own choice. When ſalvation is offered to them, they reject it with their whole heart, and moſt freely chooſe to have no part in it. They *will not come* to Chriſt, that they might be ſaved. The election of others to ſalvation, does no affect them, or alter their caſe, or circumſtances, in the leaſt.—They go to deſtruction juſt as freely, and as much by their own choice, as they would, or could do, were there none elected to be ſaved; and their deſtruction is not made any more neceſſary, or certain, by the election of ſome of mankind to ſalvation, than it would have been, were there no election.

XIII. THOUGH it be known, that a certain number of mankind are elected by God, to ſalvation, in diſtinction from others; becauſe it is revealed, and the reaſon of the thing teaches it muſt it muſt be ſo; yet it cannot be known to men in this world, who they are that are elected, and ſhall be ſaved, any farther than there is evidence that they embrace the goſpel, and are become true chriſtians. This is otherwiſe known to God alone. He knows them by name, and they are given to Chriſt, to be ſaved. "The foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, The Lord knoweth them that are his."* But this cannot be known to men, nor can there be the leaſt real

* 2 Tim. ii. 19.

real evidence, till they come to Christ, nor any appearance of it, any farther than they appear to be real christians. In this way, the Apostle Paul judged of the election of persons. "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. And ye became followers of me, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy in the Holy Ghost."* It is in this way alone that believers can come to the knowledge of their election, or get the least evidence of it. This evidence will be perfectly established, when they are actually saved, and shall abide so forever. Every one of the redeemed will know his own election of God, and that of all others who are saved; and will look to this, as the source and foundation of their redemption.

While the elect are in a state of unbelief, none in this world, neither they themselves, nor any one else, can know they are elected, and shall be saved: And the non elect cannot know that they are not elected, nor can any one else know this of them, while they are in this world, unless it be known that they have committed the unpardonable sin.

IMPROVEMENT.

I. THE doctrine of election, as it has now been stated and explained, is suited to stain and humble the pride of man.

The pride of man, prompts him to lift himself above his Maker; and he would do it, were it possible; and many fondly think themselves, in a measure, independent of him; especially in matters of the greatest importance; respecting their moral character, and their eternal interest and happiness; that their life is in their own hands,

* Thess. i. 4, 5, 6.

hands, ſo far that they can determine whether they ſhall be virtuous and holy, and be ſaved, or not, without any determination of God, reſpecting it, or his unpromiſed, undeſerved, ſpecial influence, or aſſiſtance, to turn the point in their favour. And nothing can be more croſſing and mortifying to this pride, than to be abſolutely dependent on God for all moral good, as a free undeſerved gift from him; and for ſalvation, ſo that the whole muſt be determined by God, and not by man, any farther than it is the effect of the divine determination. Such abſolute dependence on God, for holineſs and ſalvation, is implied, and held forth in the doctrine of election; and no man can underſtandingly, and cordially receive it, ſo as to have the feelings of his heart conformable to it, without "Humbling himſelf in the ſight of the Lord."

Every doctrine of the goſpel, and the whole ſyſtem of revealed truth, is levelled directly at the pride of the human heart, and ſuited to humble man; and when it has its proper effect, and is cordially received, this pride is ſlain and relinquiſhed; and what God, by Iſaiah foretold, ſhould be the effect of it, takes place in a very ſenſible, conſpicuous degree. "The lofty looks of man ſhall be humbled, and the haughtineſs of men ſhall be bowed down, and the Lord alone ſhall be exalted, in that day."* Therefore, humility, in oppoſition to pride and ſelf exaltation, was frequently mentioned by our Divine Teacher, as eſſential to a chriſtian; and he often ſaid, "Every one that exalteth himſelf, ſhall be abaſed: And he that humbleth himſelf, ſhall be exalted."† And the Apoſtle James ſays to ſinners, "Humble yourſelves in the ſight of the Lord, and he ſhall lift you up."‡

This is an evidence, among others, that the doctrine of election, is a doctrine of the goſpel, in that it coincides, in this reſpect, with all the peculiar doctrines of divine revelation,

* Iſaiah ii. 11, 12. † See Matth. xviii. 4, xxiii. 12. Luke. xiv. 11. xviii. 14.
‡ James iv. 10.

revelation, in being ſuited to humble the pride of man, and exalt the ſovereign grace of God; and therefore muſt be agreeable to the heart of every humble chriſtian. In this view, it is no wonder that it ſhould be ſo ſtrongly oppoſed, and rejected with great abhorrence and confidence, by men, with all the other moſt humbling doctrines of the goſpel; and a ſcheme of ſentiments be introduced in their room, which are really ſubverſive of the goſpel, and ſuited not to abaſe, but to flatter and gratify the pride of man; according to which he has ſomething, which he did not receive, even true virtue and holineſs, the higheſt excellence and glory of man; and by this has made himſelf to differ from others, without any ſpecial diſtinguiſhing influence of God; and in this reſpect is independent of him; which he therefore aſcribes not to the grace of God, but to himſelf, and glories in it. The following ſentence of St. Paul, is leveled at this pride and haughtineſs of man, and if properly regarded, ſufficient to demoliſh it. "Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what haſt thou that thou didſt not receive? Now if thou didſt *receive it*, why doſt thou glory as if thou hadſt not received it?"*

The humbling doctrine of election, may be, indeed, abuſed, and ſo improved as to gratify the pride of man, while it is not really underſtood, nor in truth cordially received. A man may be led to conclude, even from the pride of his heart, and without any reaſon, that he is elected to ſalvation, and herein diſtinguiſhed by God, from moſt others; and this may be very pleaſing to his pride, while he does not underſtand, and in his heart admit the only ground of this diſtinction, when made by God: And he, at bottom, feels as if he was diſtinguiſhed from others, and had received this peculiar favour, out of reſpect to ſome good thing in him, by which he differed from others. Or he attends only to *the diſtinction itſelf*,

* 1 Cor. iv. 7.

itself, without considering the ground of it, and is pleased with this, and becomes a zealous, *proud* advocate for the doctrine of election. Therefore, many of the opposers of this doctrine suppose, that all who are advocates for it, are pleased with it, only from selfishness and pride, because they consider themselves as the elect of God, and hereby distinguished and favoured above others. And there is, perhaps, no other way for pride to account for it, or to be reconciled to it. The true christian receives it, as glorious to God, and exalting sovereign grace, and humbling man, while he considers himself as infinitely guilty and vile, and wholly lost in his sins, and if he be saved, it must be by the distinguishing, sovereign grace of God, who has mercy on whom he will have mercy, according to his decree of election, which affords the only ground of hope to man.

II. WHAT has been said in this section, on the doctrine of particular election, may serve to discover and state the character of a true christian, so far as his views and exercises relate to this doctrine, and those connected with it.

1. This is not a discouraging doctrine to him, nor disagreeable, though he do not know that he is a christian, or is elected to salvation; but has great and prevailing doubts of this. He knows that if he were left to himself, he should not determine the point in his own favour; but his impenitent, unbelieving heart, would reject Christ, and he go on to destruction. That he is wholly dependent on God for salvation, and if *he* do not determine in his favour, and have not elected him to salvation, and do not distinguish him from others, by granting him those influences, and that renovation, which they who perish have not, he shall not be saved, but perish forever. Therefore, the doctrine of election

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can be no matter of diſcouragement to him, it cannot render his caſe worſe, than it would be if none were elected: for then he could have no hope of ſalvation; and the only hope he can have is grounded on this doctrine, and that he may be one of the elect. And his hope riſes or ſinks according to the evidence he has of this, by perceiving himſelf to be the ſubject of the regenerating, ſanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit: Or the contrary.

2. The true believer is pleaſed, with being entirely dependent on God for his ſalvation, and that he ſhould determine whether he ſhall be ſaved or not; and does not deſire, that he himſelf or others, ſhould be ſaved in any other way, but according to the eternal purpoſe of God. It is moſt diſagreeable to him, that any creature ſhould determine this, in any one inſtance. He knows it belongs to God, to decide this important matter; that he has a right to do it, and he only is able to determine it perfectly right, agreeable to infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, ſo as ſhall be moſt for his glory, and promote the intereſt of his kingdom. He is pleaſed, that in this way, God is exalted, in the exerciſe of ſovereign grace, and the ſinner humbled, and the moſt important intereſt forever ſecured and promoted in the beſt manner. He deſires no other ſalvation, for himſelf or others, but that which is the free gift of God, and the fruit of his electing love; and which infinite wiſdom ſees will be moſt for the glory of God, and the general good; and that without knowing whether *his* ſalvation be conſiſtent with this, or not, and whether he be one of the elect, or not.

3. All the chriſtian's prayers and devotions are upon this plan, and agreeable to this doctrine. They contain in them, either an expreſs or implicit acknowledgment of his entire dependence on God for ſalvation, and every thing, for which he prays or gives thanks; and that all

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the good he desires, must be the fruit of the determination of him, who changes not in his purpose and design; and expres, or imply, an unconditional, implicit resignation to his wise and holy will.

The opposers of this doctrine, in heart and words, do often really acknowledge it in words, in their prayers to God for salvation, &c. But the real christian does it with his heart. He may indeed, through the prejudices of education, or otherwise, by not understanding the doctrine in theory, and entertaining wrong conceptions of it, and of other points, which are connected with it, be led to oppose it, in speculation; but so far as his heart is renewed, all his religious exercises and devotions, are agreeable to the doctrine of election, and an acknowledgment of it. And so far as it appears, that any person is at heart an enemy to that doctrine; there is just so much evidence that he is an enemy to him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

SECTION XIII.

Whether any of the Redeemed arrive to Perfect Holiness in this Life.

THAT no man, whatever his advantages and attainments may be, does arrive to sinless perfection in this life, seems to be clearly asserted in a number of passages of scripture. Solomon says, "There is no man that sinneth not. There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not. Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?"* These are strong expressions, asserting, that there is no man on earth

* 1 Kings viii. 46. Eccl. vii. 20. Prov. xx. 9.

earth ſo perfect, as to be wholly without ſin. Job ſays, "If I ſay I am perfect, it ſhall alſo prove me perverſe."* How could his ſaying, he was perfect, prove him to be perverſe, unleſs it be on this ground, that no man is perfect in this life? This being certain, if a man ſay he is perfect, it proves that he is deceived, and knows not the truth, and therefore, is not a good man. The Apoſtle Paul, who probably was the holieſt man that ever lived, declares he was not perfect. "Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which alſo I am apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus. Brethren, I count not myſelf to have apprehended: But this one thing I do, forgetting thoſe things which are behind, and reaching forth unto thoſe things which are before, I preſs toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus."† And he gives ſuch a particular and ſad deſcription of his own ſinfulneſs, in his letter to the church at Rome, that many who are ſtrangers to the corruption of the human heart, and the great degree of ſin attending true chriſtians, and their keen ſenſibility of it, cannot believe that he means there to deſcribe his own exerciſes and character, or thoſe of any chriſtian.‡ And this ſame Apoſtle repreſents all chriſtians, as in a ſtate of warfare, by reaſon of evil inclinations and luſts in their hearts, which oppoſe that which is the fruit of the ſpirit, in them, and prevents their doing what they would. "The fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh: And theſe are contrary the one to the other; ſo that ye cannot do the things that ye would."§ To will was preſent. When they looked forward, they wiſhed actually to do and be all that which chriſtianity dictates, and of which they could have any idea; but when they came to act, they always fell

* Job ix. 20. † Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14.
‡ See Rom. vii. 14—24. § Gal. v. 17.

fell ſhort, and ſinful inclinations prevented their doing as they deſired, and defiled their beſt exerciſes.

The Apoſtle James teſtifies to the ſame truth. He ſays of himſelf, and of all chriſtians, that in many things, they all offended.* And the Apoſtle John ſays, "If we ſay, we have no ſin, we deceive ourſelves, and the truth is not in us."† Here it is not only aſſerted, that every chriſtian is attended with ſin, in all he does in this life: But that it is ſo evident to the real chriſtian, and ſo much his ſenſible burden and unhappineſs, that it is certain, that he who ſays, or thinks, he has no ſin, is not only greatly deceived; but is a ſtranger to real chriſtianity, and knows not the ſaving truth.

Theſe paſſages of ſcripture are deciſive, and prove that it is made certain by a divine conſtitution, that no man ſhall be without ſin in this life: For theſe are declarations from God, of this truth. Solomon could not ſay, "There is no man that ſinneth not—There is not a juſt man upon earth, that doth good and ſinneth not;" if there were not a divine conſtitution, which rendered it certain, that the moſt righteous, and beſt of men, are not without ſin, in this life: For this is affirmed of *man*, of every man in this world, in every age of it, from the beginning to the end of it. How could the Apoſtle Paul ſay to a chriſtian church, "The fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh. And theſe are contrary the one to the other; ſo that ye cannot do the things that ye would:" And how could the Apoſtles John and James ſay, "If we ſay we have no ſin, we deceive ourſelves, and the truth is not in us—In many things we all offend;" if this were not true of all, and common to all chriſtians, at all times? It is impoſſible they ſhould ſay this under inſpiration, were there not a known conſtitution of heaven, that no man ſhould be

* Jam. iii. 2. † 1 John i. 8.

free from ſin, in this life. Therefore, theſe declarations demonſtate that there is ſuch a conſtitution: That God has determined, and made it known, that no man ſhall live in the body, without ſinning.

Hence we may be certain, that when the Apoſtle John ſays, "Whoſoever abideth in him, ſinneth not: Whoſoever ſinneth, hath not ſeen him, neither known him.—Whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit ſin: For his ſeed remaineth in him; and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God;"* he does not mean to aſſert, that every true chriſtian, or any one of them, is free from ſin in this life: For then he would expreſsly contradict himſelf in this ſame letter. But his meaning in the laſt quoted paſſages, muſt be, That he who is born of God, and united to Chriſt by faith, does not ſin as others do, or as he did before he was born of God. He no longer *lives in ſin*, and makes it his trade and buſineſs, as the unregenerate do; but lives a holy life, devoted to Chriſt, though attended with much imperfection and ſin. If this be not his meaning, which is a natural and eaſy one, he not only contradicts what he had ſaid in the words quoted from the firſt chapter, by aſſerting that chriſtians *may* live without ſin in this world: But aſſerts that every one that is born of God, does not, from that time, commit one ſin, or have the leaſt degree of ſin in his heart or conduct: Which few or none of thoſe who have made uſe of theſe paſſages, to prove chriſtians may be perfectly holy in this life, do believe is true; ſo that theſe words prove too much, or nothing at all, for them.

Chriſtians are frequently repreſented as being *perfect*, in diſtinction from thoſe who are not real chriſtians, or from other real chriſtians, who are not *perfect*. This has been improved as an argument, that ſome chriſtians do obtain ſinleſs perfection, in this life, ſuppoſing that this is intended by being perfect. But the careful reader of the

* Chap. iii. 6, 9.

the Bible, will find, that *to be perfect* has a various and different meaning, when used with respect to different subjects and relations. When used with respect to God, it means *absolute perfection*, in which sense it is not applicable to any creature; especially to man in this state.—When applied to christians, it sometimes means real sincerity and uprightness of heart, or their being real christians, or good men, in distinction from those who are so only in appearance and pretence. In this sense Hezekiah appears to use it, when he says, "Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart."* And in this sense God speaks of Job as a perfect and upright man.† Job himself uses the word in a different sense, when he says, "If I say I am perfect, it would prove me perverse.‡ Otherwise he would contradict his Maker, and himself too; for he held his integrity fast, and appealed to God that he was upright.§ Sometimes it means, whole and entire christians, acting out every christian grace, or every branch of christianity, in distinction from those who were defective in some christian attainments, while they appeared to be chiefly attentive to others. And sometimes they are called perfect, who have made greater proficiency in the christian life, and are stronger and more thorough christians, in distinction from the weaker, and those of less attainments. He who carefully studies his Bible, will find, that christians are not said to be perfect in any higher sense than these. The Apostle Paul, in a forecited place, says, that he did not think himself perfect; yet in the very next words speaks of himself and others as being perfect. "Let us therefore, *as many as be perfect*, be thus minded."‖ He must use the word in two different senses, otherwise he would contradict himself. When he says, he does not think or pretend that he is

* Isaiah xxxviii. 3. † Job i. 8. ‡ Chap. ix. 20.
§ Chap. xxxi. 6. ‖ Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14, 15.

perfect, he means ſinleſs perfection. When he ſays, "As many of us as be perfect." He means thoſe who had made conſiderable improvement, and advances in chriſtianity; not being, in this reſpect, babes or children, but grown men.*

It is certainly the duty of all chriſtians to be perfectly holy, in obedience to the law of God, requiring them to love God with all their heart and ſoul and mind and ſtrength; and their neighbours as themſelves. And every thing contrary to this, or ſhort of it, which takes place in their hearts or lives, is criminal. The law cannot be abated, nor their obligation to obey it perfectly, annulled in the leaſt degree. But it does not follow from this, that any one does, or will, come up to the rule, and do the whole of his duty, in this life. For this the chriſtian depends wholly upon God. He is no farther holy, than he is made ſo by the omnipotent energy of the divine ſpirit; and though God requires them to be perfectly holy; yet he is under no obligation, by promiſe, or any other way, to make them perfectly holy, in this world. His requiring it of them, does not imply any ſuch obligation, and the covenant of grace contains no promiſe of this. In that there is a divine promiſe, that they ſhall perſevere in holineſs to the end of life; and that they ſhall be perfectly holy in his kingdom forever; for this is neceſſarily implied in perfect happineſs and eternal life. But it contains no promiſe of any particular degree of holineſs, more than is neceſſary to prevent their falling totally and finally, from a ſtate of grace. As to the degree of holineſs and the particular exerciſes of it, in every chriſtian, God orders it as he pleaſes, to anſwer his own wiſe and infinitely good purpoſes.

The Redeemer is able to make every believer perfectly holy, from his firſt converſion, ſo that he never ſhould be

* See Heb. v. 13, 14.

be guilty of another ſin. And if this had been wiſeſt and beſt, it would have been ſo ordered. Therefore, we are certain, it is moſt wiſe and beſt, that none of the redeemed ſhould be perfectly holy in this life, though we were unable to ſee any reaſon why it is ſo. But we may *now* ſee ſome of the wiſe ends which are anſwered hereby, and reaſons why the redeemed are in ſuch an imperfect ſtate, and in ſo great a degree ſinful, while in this world; a few of which will be mentioned here.

1. If they were perfectly holy, they would not be ſo fit to live in this diſordered, ſinful world. There would not be that analogy of one thing to another, which is obſerved in the works of God, and which is proper and wiſe. This is not a world and ſtate ſuited to be the dwelling place of perfectly holy creatures. It is a proper ſtate of diſcipline, ſuited to form and train up the redeemed from among men for a ſtate of perfect holineſs and happineſs, in another world.

2. If chriſtians were perfectly holy in this life, it would not be ſo much a ſtate of trial, as now it is. Their temptations could not be ſo many and ſtrong, as now they are; and ſatan could not have ſo much power and advantage to tempt, and try to diſtreſs and ſeduce them. And their danger would not be ſo great and viſible.—And they would not have that opportunity or occaſion of the exerciſe of ſome particular graces, ſuch as conſtant humiliation and repentance for their renewed ſins, loathing and abhorring themſelves, fighting againſt and mortifying their own luſts, longing for deliverance, and faith and patience, in theſe dark and diſagreeable circumſtances, as now they have; by which they honour Chriſt, and are preparing for greater happineſs and rewards in his kingdom.

3. Such a ſtate of imperfection and ſin, is ſuited and neceſſary, more effectually to teach them, and make them

know, by abundant experience, their own total depravity by nature; the evil nature and odiousness of sin; their own ill desert; the exceeding, inexpressible, and inconceivable deceitfulness, obstinacy and wickedness of their own hearts; and their absolute dependence on sovereign grace, to prevent their eternal destruction, and to save them; their need of the atonement which Christ has made; and the greatness of that power and grace which saves such creatures. These, and many other things, are more thoroughly and effectually impressed on their minds, and they are instructed, and learn them to better advantage, in the school of Christ, in this state of imperfection and sin, than could be, in a state of perfect holiness.

King David, by falling into sin, was led to reflect upon, and confess his native depravity; the exceeding evil of sin, as against God; his desert of destruction, and the justice of God in punishing him; his need of pardon, and of an atonement, and of the renovation of his heart, and his dependence on God for this. On that occasion, the following is his language. "According to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin; for I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold! I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."*

4. Believers, by being sanctified but in part, and attended with so much sin in this life, obtain a more clear view, and greater sense of the evil of sin, and the miserable state of the sinner; and are hereby prepared to know and enjoy the happiness of a perfectly holy state, to a greater degree,

* Psal. li. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10.

degree, than otherwiſe they could: The more ſenſible they are of the evil from which they are delivered, the greater will the poſitive good, which they enjoy, appear to them. And their gratitude and praiſe for the ſovereign grace, of which they are the ſubjects, will riſe proportionably higher; by which God will be more glorified, and they more happy forever; ſo that all this will turn to their good in the end, and they will be much more happy, than if they had been perfectly holy from their converſion; and had not, after that, gone through a ſtate of conflict with ſin and ſatan; and through much tribulation, entered into the kingdom of heaven.

5. By this, the power, wiſdom, goodneſs, truth and faithfulneſs of the Redeemer, are in a peculiar manner, exerciſed and diſplayed, as they could not be, in any other way. This gives occaſion and opportunity, for the moſt apparent and glorious manifeſtation of theſe; by which he glorifies himſelf, and the happineſs of the redeemed is greatly advanced. Therefore it is, on the whole, moſt wiſe and beſt, that the work of ſanctification ſhould be gradual, and not perfected at once; and that the ſaints ſhould be ſanctified but in part, while in this world, and attended with much imperfection and ſin to the end of life.

The exceeding greatneſs of the power of God, is exerted and diſplayed, in renewing the depraved heart of man, and forming it to true holineſs.* It is a power which ſubdues the obſtinacy, and all poſſible oppoſition of the human heart; and which overcomes and caſts out ſatan, and all his hoſt of combined enemies to God and man. Therefore, this is a greater exertion of power, than that by which the natural world was made; for that was formed out of nothing: Therefore, there could be no oppoſition and reſiſtance to creating power, in that inſtance. And the power diſplayed in creating holineſs, appears

* Eph. i. 19.

appears as much greater and more excellent, than that which is exerted in creating the natural world, as the former effect is greater, more important and excellent, than the latter.

But this power, is made more conſpicuous and ſenſible, in preſerving and maintaining a ſmall degree of holineſs in the heart of a chriſtian, in the midſt of the oppoſition, with which he is ſurrounded and aſſaulted, by the ſtrength of evil propenſities within him, by the world, and by ſatan, than it would be, in forming him to perfect holineſs at once. In this way, the weak chriſtian, in the midſt of ſtrong temptations, and potent enemies, conſtantly ſeeking, and exerting all their power and cunning, to devour and deſtroy him, is preſerved and upheld, through a courſe of trial, by the mighty, omnipotent hand of the Redeemer; and the little ſpark of holineſs, implanted in the believer's heart, is continued alive and burning; while there is ſo much, both within and without, tending to extinguiſh it; which is really more of a conſtant miracle, and manifeſtation of the power of Chriſt, than it would be to preſerve a little ſpark of fire, for a courſe of years, in the midſt of the ſea, while the mighty waves are fiercely daſhing againſt it, and upon it, attempting to overwhelm and extinguiſh it. The chriſtian is, by this ſituation, and his experience, made more and more ſenſible of this, and learns that he lives by the power of Chriſt, and repairs to this, that he may be "Strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," or his mighty power, that he may be able to ſtand, and perſevere in the midſt of enemies.* Out of weakneſs, he is made ſtrong, and becomes valiant in the ſpiritual combat.† And Chriſt, by theſe babes and ſucklings, ordains and diſplays ſtrength, and perfects praiſe. To this the Apoſtle Paul atteſts. "My ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs.

* Eph. vi. 10. † Heb. xi. 34.

weakneſs. Moſt gladly therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, *that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me.*"*

The wiſdom of the Redeemer is alſo employed and manifeſted, in carrying all believers, and the church militant in general, through this life, and to the end of the world, ſafe to a ſtate of perfection in glory. He conducts all things, external and internal, with reſpect to every chriſtian; and ſo orders the degree, manner and time of his influence and aſſiſtance, as to keep them from falling totally and finally; and carries on the work of ſanctification in the wiſeſt manner, and ſo as to defeat ſatan in all his wiles and cunning devices, by which he attempts to ſeduce and deſtroy them. It requires infinite ſkill and wiſdom, to ſanctify a corrupt heart, and to order every thing ſo, with reſpect to each individual, at all times, and every moment, as effectually to prevent his falling away, though he walks upon the verge of ruin, and has ſuch ſtrong enemies within him, and without: And ſo adjuſt every circumſtance, that even thoſe things and events, which ſeem to be calculated for his ruin, ſhall promote his holineſs and ſalvation. Were there no ſuch perſons, weak and very imperfect and ſinful, to live in a world full of enemies, and to be conducted on through all dangers, in the midſt of cunning enemies, having great ſkill and ſucceſs in deſtroying men, and carried ſafe to heaven at laſt, there would be no opportunity for ſuch exerciſe and diſplay of infinite, unſearchable wiſdom, as this gives. Were not the Redeemer as wiſe as he is powerful, no chriſtian could be ſaved; but on his wiſdom they may and do rely with confidence, comfort and joy. In his hands they, and the whole church, are ſafe, and all adverſe things ſhall work for good, and iſſue in their perfection in holineſs, and eternal ſalvation. And well may they, with admiration, exclaim with the Apoſtle Paul: "O the depth of the riches, both of the wiſdom

* 2 Cor. xii. 9.

wiſdom and knowledge of God! How unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways paſt finding out!"* And in heaven they will aſcribe WISDOM to the Redeemer forever.†

The goodneſs, tender love, and wonderful condeſcenſion of the Saviour, are alſo manifeſt, and acted out, in his conſtant and kind attendance on believers, though they be ſo imperfect and ſinful, and offend in ſo many things; and are conſtantly guilty of that, which would be ſufficient to provoke him to give them up to ſin and ruin, were he not infinitely good and kind: There is much more opportunity to exerciſe and diſcover this goodneſs and condeſcending grace, forbearance and long ſuffering, than if they were perfectly innocent and holy, from the time of their converſion. This remark is illuſtrated by the character and conduct of the true diſciples of Chriſt, when he was on earth, in the human nature; and his goodneſs, condeſcenſion and forbearance, towards them. They had, and diſcovered, much ſelfiſhneſs and pride, worldlineſs, ingratitude, ſtupidity and unbelief. They were ſlow of heart to believe, to learn and get underſtanding, under the teaching of Chriſt, and in his ſchool, while he was ſo abundant in his labours with them. They were honeſt, and true friends to their maſter, but did not improve the advantages which they had, as they ought to have done; and in many inſtances groſsly abuſed them: Yet Chriſt did not leave off his kindneſs to them; but bore with them, in all their dullneſs and wickedneſs, and loved them unto the end; and took effectual methods to cure all of them, of their great moral diſorders, and prepare them to enter into a ſtate of perfect holineſs at death; except Judas the traitor, who never was a true diſciple. Had they been perfectly holy, from the time they commenced his diſciples, or at any time while he was with them, there would not have been ſuch occaſion and opportunity, for Chriſt to

* Rom. xi. 33. † Rev. v. 12.

to exercise and discover, such condescending grace, and long suffering towards them.

Thus he treats all his true disciples, while in this life. Their imperfections and sins, and froward dispositions, by which they abuse him, in all his goodness to them, call for infinite condescension, grace and forbearance, in the continuance of his loving kindness to them. They are, in some measure, sensible of this, while in this world, and lament their sinful defects, and great wickedness, and admire the goodness and patience of the Redeemer, in bearing with them, and not casting them into hell; but still continue very far from what they know they ought to be. But in heaven, they will see this in a more clear light, and forever remember, and with the most sensible gratitude, admire and adore the condescension, and wonderful grace, which the Saviour exercised towards them, while they were so stupid, perverse and abusive. This could not take place, were real christians perfectly holy in this life.

The truth and faithfulness of the Redeemer, are also by this, tried, and made conspicuous. He promises, that he will never leave nor forsake, or cast out them, who come to him, and enter into covenant with him. And he fulfils his word, and is faithful to them, though they are in such an awful and provoking degree, perverse and abusive. Though they fall, they shall not be utterly cast down; for the Redeemer upholdeth them with his hand.* When they transgress, he often visits their sin with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes. He chastiseth them for their profit, that they may be partakers of his holiness; yet he will not utterly take away his loving kindness from them, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail.†

Thus the wisdom and goodness of God appear, in ordering it so, that no man, even the greatest saint, shall be perfectly

* Psal. xxxvii. 24. † Psal. lxxxix. 30—33.

perfectly holy in this life; but all the redeemed, ſhall, in this world, be very imperfect and ſinful, from the reaſons which have been mentioned, and the ends which are anſwered hereby. More might be thought of and mentioned; and there is no reaſon to think, that the one half, are diſcerned by us now. A clear and full view, of the wiſdom and goodneſs of God, in this, is reſerved to the future ſtate, when the redeemed will review all the diſpenſations of heaven, and the wiſe counſel and works of him, who is "Wonderful in counſel, and excellent in working," towards themſelves, and the church, with wonder, gratitude, and everlaſting joy, "Saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing. Bleſſing, and honour, and glory and power, be unto him that ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever."*

But though the wiſdom and goodneſs of God appear, in ordering it ſo, that no man in this life ſhall attain to ſinleſs perfection; and that the church on earth ſhould by paſſing through a ſtate of diſcipline, trial and temptation, be trained up for a perfectly holy and happy ſtate in heaven; and that this ſhall be the common lot of chriſtians: Yet for equally wiſe reaſons, there are ſome exceptions, with reſpect to the latter: Some are taken out of the world immediately, or ſoon after their converſion, and are made perfectly holy, without paſſing through a ſcene of trial, temptation, and ſinful imperfection. The thief, who was converted on the croſs, is an inſtance of this: And how many are converted on their death bed, and juſt before they paſs into the inviſible world, cannot be certainly determined by us, while in this ſtate. And all the infants who are ſaved, are inſtances of this.

IT

* Rev. v. 12, 13.

IT has been a queſtion with ſome, Whether chriſtians ought to pray that they may be perfectly holy, in this life? Some have thought this queſtion muſt be anſwered in the affirmative, and that believers may, and ought to pray for perfect holineſs, while in this world; ſince it is their duty to be perfectly holy, and it is deſirable; and therefore ought to be deſired: And conſequently, they may and ought to pray for it.

ANSWER. It is, in itſelf conſidered, deſirable to be perfectly holy; and this muſt appear deſirable to all chriſtians, viewed in and by itſelf. But as God has determined and declared this ſhall not be, that no man ſhall be without ſin, in this life; and therefore it is known, that it is not, on the whole, beſt that any man ſhould be perfectly holy, in this world; in this view of it, it is not deſirable; nor ought any to pray for it. An event which is contrary to the known will of God, that it ſhould take place, is not deſirable, in this view of it, and no one ought to pray that it may take place; for ſuch a deſire and prayer is oppoſition to the declared will of God, and carries in it real rebellion againſt him. No man ought to pray for any thing without an entire reſignation to the will of God; therefore, he ought not to pray for any thing, but on ſuppoſition that it is agreeable to the will of God. But no ſuch ſuppoſition can be made, when God has already declared it is not agreeable to his will to grant it. It has been proved, that God has revealed that it is not his will, that any man ſhall be perfectly holy in this life; therefore, no man can, in this view of it, pray for perfect holineſs, while in this life, with reſignation to the will of God; and therefore ought not to pray for it. This would be praying for that, which is known not to be deſirable, and not wiſeſt and beſt, that it ſhould take place, and is oppoſition to the known will of God, which is oppoſition to God.

Therefore,

Therefore, it is not to be ſuppoſed, that a chriſtian does ever pray that he may be prefectly holy in this life, while he has a full conviction in his mind, that it is contrary to the revealed will of God, that this ſhould ever take place, in any inſtance. But a chriſtian may not have attended to the evidence there is from the Bible, that no man is to be perfectly holy in this life; or through ſome prejudice, not be convinced that this is there revealed; and conſequently, may pray that he may be perfectly holy, while in this world, and not know or believe, that he aſks for that which is contrary to the will of God to grant.—In this caſe, his ſin conſiſts in not properly attending to what God has revealed concerning this, or in not believing it, though the evidence be clearly ſet before him.

And as the chriſtian is not omniſcient, and ſees not every truth at once, or with equal clearneſs and conſtancy, of which he has been convinced in theory and ſpeculation; and one thing has a vaſtly greater impreſſion on his mind, than another; and at different times, the ſame truth, may have much more of his attention, than at another, and make a more ſenſible impreſſion: It is therefore poſſible, that he ſhould have ſuch a clear view, and great and ſenſible impreſſion of his own ſinfulneſs; of the evil of ſin, and the hatefulneſs of it; and of the deſirableneſs of deliverance from it, and of being perfectly holy, and conformed to Chriſt, as earneſtly to pray, that, if it be conſiſtent with the will of God, he may be freed from all ſin, and live a perfectly holy life, for time to come; not at that time reflecting, that God has revealed that no man ſhall be ſo, in this life, or thinking any more of it, than if it were not true: And yet he cannot be ſaid to *diſbelieve* it; for as ſoon as it comes into his view, and he reflects upon it, he believes it, and withdraws his petition. This is doubtleſs poſſible, and may

have

have taken place in many inſtances; and perhaps is not ſinful.*

IMPROVEMENT.

* Perhaps the prayer of the Redeemer may well be accounted for in this way, when he ſaid in the garden, "O my Father, if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me: Nevertheleſs, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Matth. xxvi. 39. The human mind of Chriſt, had ſuch a view and ſenſe of the ſufferings which were before him, that it was in a degree overborne and ſwallowed up with the dreadfulneſs of them, and the impoſſibility of his going through them, without more divine aſſiſtance than he then experienced. And it was ſo ordered by God, that the abſolute neceſſity of his ſuffering thus, ſhould not then be in view, his mind being wholly arreſted by the view and ſenſe of his ſufferings, and the dreadfulneſs of the cup which was then ſet before him; and the human nature did, in a ſenſe, ſhrink back, at the view of it. And in this ſituation of mind, he prayed as above. It was wiſe and important, that the human nature of the Redeemer, ſhould be placed in ſuch a ſituation at this time, for two reaſons. *Firſt*, That he might have the beſt opportunity to diſcover his diſpoſition, and how he would act under this ſevere trial, when his ſufferings were ſet before him, in all the greatneſs and dreadfulneſs of them. The dreadful cup was ſet before him, that he might have the cleareſt ſight of it; and in this ſituation, diſcover what he choſe, and whether he was willing to drink it, if neceſſary for the glory of God, and the ſalvation of the elect; and make the choice in the ſight of all worlds, that he might be, and appear to be, perfectly voluntary, and take this ſuffering upon himſelf, when he was in a ſituation to have the cleareſt view, and greateſt ſenſe poſſible, of the evil to be ſuffered; of the dreadful ingredients of the bitter cup. In this moſt trying ſituation, he voluntarily gave himſelf up to this dreadful ſuffering, if this were neceſſary, and the will of his Father: The latter not being preſent, and ſo impreſſed on his mind as the former, as a certain reality: And ſo was in a meaſure out of view, and did not demand his particular attention; in conſequence of a particular divine influence on his mind, at that time. *Secondly*, By this, the neceſſity of the Redeemer's ſuffering as he did, in order to the pardon and ſalvation of ſinners, and the impoſſibility of their being ſaved in any other way, but by his making atonement for their ſin by his own blood, and being made a curſe in their ſtead, was ſet in a moſt clear and ſtriking light. Since the infinitely worthy Redeemer, the only begotten, well beloved, Son of God, did not conſent to ſuffer, on any other ſuppoſition; and earneſtly prayed that he might not ſuffer, if it were poſſible for him to be releaſed from it, conſiſtent with the glory of God, and the ſalvation of ſinners; his petition would have been granted, if it were poſſible, that he ſhould not ſuffer, and yet theſe ends be anſwered.

IMPROVEMENT.

I. FROM the ſubject of this ſection, we may be certain, that they are not real chriſtians, who ſay, or think they are arrived, to ſuch a perfect ſtate, as to live without ſin. A chriſtian may, through the prejudices of education, ignorance, or otherwiſe, think that ſome chriſtians may, and actually do attain to ſinleſs perfection, in this life. But he can never think *himſelf* to be without ſin. His acquaintance with the law of God, in the ſpirituality and extent of it, and with his own heart, is ſuch, that by keeping theſe in view, and comparing them with each other, his own ſinfulneſs ſtares him in the face; and he condemns himſelf before God, as very far from what he ought to be, and exceeding guilty and vile. And the higher he riſes in holy exerciſes, and the more circumſpect and watchful he is, the greater light and diſcerning he has to ſee the defects and corruptions of his own heart; and the more painful is the view of his own character, and he is diſpoſed to exclaim with the Apoſtle Paul, "O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death!"*

The Apoſtle John decides this point, in moſt expreſs terms. He ſays, "If we ſay that we have no ſin, we deceive ourſelves, and the truth is not in us."† He does not mean, "If we ſay we never did ſin," becauſe this is contrary to his expreſs words, which are in the preſent time, If we ſay, *we have no ſin*, now, at this preſent time. According to this, no man can with truth ſay, at any time of his life, "I have no ſin, or I am without ſin, and perfectly holy." Therefore, no real chriſtian will ſay it, or can think this of himſelf; none but thoſe who are deceived about themſelves, to ſuch a degree, as is inconſiſtent

* Rom. vii. 24. † 1 John i. 8.

inconſiſtent with their being the children of light and of the day, can ſay, or even think this of themſelves. This Apoſtle, in the next verſe but one, ſpeaks of the time paſt, and ſays, "If we ſay, that *we have not ſinned*, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." This is a different propoſition from the foregoing; it reſpects what they had been and done. If they had no ſin now, and this could be ſaid with truth, they could not ſay they had never ſinned, without contradicting the whole goſpel, which declares all men to be ſinners; and ſo making God the Saviour, a liar. But the other propoſition, reſpects what they were, at that time, or ſhould be in any future time, while in this world; ſo that none who is not deceived, and has embraced the truth, can ever ſay or think, while in this life, that he now has no ſin. There have been, and now are, thoſe who ſay they have no ſin. By this they declare, they are deceived, and ſtrangers to real chriſtianity, and give greater evidence that they are not true chriſtians, than they could, by only ſaying in expreſs words, that they are not; for perſons may really think, and may ſay, that they are not chriſtians, when they are really ſuch.

II. FROM this ſubject we learn, that perſons have no reaſon to conclude they are no chriſtians, merely becauſe they ſee much ſin in themſelves. This ſight of ſin, often ariſes from their having that diſcerning, which none but true chriſtians have; who, by reaſon of this diſcerning, ſee more ſin in themſelves than others do, and are more affected with it. And their complaints of themſelves, of the amazing corruption and wickedneſs of their hearts, which they now ſee more clearly than ever before; and which they mention, as an evidence that they have no grace, are often, in the view of the judicious chriſtian, to whom they are made, an evidence, that they are real chriſtians.

Great degrees of ſin, are conſiſtent with ſome degree of true holineſs. Therefore, if any thing can be found, that is of the nature of holineſs, a ſight of great ſinfulneſs is not an evidence againſt a perſon, that he is not a chriſtian, but the contrary. They who have made the greateſt proficiency in holineſs, ſee moſt of their own ſinfulneſs.

III. THIS ſubject teaches us, not to be forward to cenſure others, as no chriſtians, becauſe of great imperfections, and many things which are unbecoming and diſagreeable. For the beſt of chriſtians are very imperfect and ſinful in this ſtate: And in many things all offend. There too often appears in perſons, a *cenſorious ſpirit* towards their fellow chriſtians, which is a greater evidence of the want of real religion, than thoſe things for which they cenſure others, as no chriſtians.

IV. LET none improve this doctrine, as an encouragement to ſloth and ſin, and a diſcouragement to watchfulneſs againſt ſin, and exertions and ſtrivings after greater degrees of holineſs. They who are diſpoſed to make this improvement, of the imperfections and ſinfulneſs of all chriſtians, and indulge themſelves in it, have no reaſon to think themſelves to be chriſtians; for this is directly contrary to the ſpirit of a chriſtian. If it be rightly improved, it will be a motive to preſs forward, to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; and to cleanſe themſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.

SECTION

SECTION XIV.

Concerning Death; a Separate State; the General Reſurrection and Judgment; and the Eternal State of Happineſs or Miſery.

I. WHEN man had ſinned, and God had opened to him a new conſtitution, for the redemption of ſome of the human race, by a Saviour, by ſaying to the ſerpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy ſeed and her ſeed: He ſhall bruiſe thy head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel;"* He ſaid to Adam, and in him to all mankind, that under this new conſtitution, and from this new ſtate of probation, he ſhould paſs into another ſtate, and go into the inviſible world, by a ſeparation between ſoul and body; and his body ſhould turn to duſt, from whence it was taken. "Duſt thou art, and unto duſt ſhalt thou return." This ſentence muſt refer to his body only; for this only was duſt, and taken out of the ground. His ſpirit or ſoul, was immaterial, and not duſt, or taken out of the ground, but a diſtinct exiſtence from the body, by which he bore the image of God. "And God ſaid, let us make man in our own image, after our likeneſs. And the Lord God formed man of the duſt of the ground, and breathed into his noſtrils the breath of life, and man became a living ſoul."† Therefore, Solomon deſcribes what is contained in this ſentence, in the following words, "Then ſhall

* Gen. iii. 15. † Gen. i. 16. ii. 7.

the duſt return to the earth, as it was; and the ſpirit ſhall return to God who gave it."* The death of the body, does not imply the death of the ſoul, but the latter exiſts, when the former is turned to duſt. This is declared by our Saviour. "Fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul."†

This ſeparation between ſoul and body, by which the latter is diſſolved, and turned to duſt, was not included in the threatning, "In the day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die;" for had there been no redemption, mankind muſt have been miſerable, in ſoul and body forever; which death, all they who are not redeemed will ſuffer, when the work of redemption is finiſhed, which is called the *ſecond death*, with reference to the body's turning to duſt, which is called death, and is the *firſt death*. Man is indeed, conſidered as a fallen creature, a ſinner, when he is doomed to this firſt death; and alſo, as in a new ſtate of probation; and it is wiſely ordered, as ſubſerving the deſign of redemption. It is proper and important, that the future ſtate ſhould be inviſible to ſenſe, which it would not be, if all men paſſed into it with their bodies; or without dying. But when the body dies and turns to duſt, all that is viſible and diſcerned by our ſenſes, is left behind, and the inviſible part of man, departs into another ſtate *inſenſibly*; and thus the future ſtate is kept inviſible, as the object of faith, not of ſight. And this tends more ſenſibly to keep in view, the fallen, ſinful ſtate of man, while all are doomed to death, which could not take place, had man been innocent; and it tends to humble man in his own eyes, ſince his body is ſoon to turn to duſt; and to make him feel his wretchedneſs, if he have no ſecurity of exiſtence and happineſs in a future ſtate, and to excite an attention to Chriſt and the goſpel, which brings life and immortality to

* Eccl. xii. 7. † Math. x. 28.

to light, and a future reſurrection of the body, formed every way perfect, beautiful and glorious, never to die again.

The only time of probation allotted to man, is that of this life, to which the death of the body puts an end; ſo that every one, will be happy or miſerable in the future, endleſs ſtate, according to his character, which is formed before the ſoul is ſeparated from the body. This is plain and certain from the ſcripture, where there is not a word, or the leaſt hint of another ſtate of trial, after the death of the body: But much is there ſaid to the contrary of this. This life is repreſented, as the ſowing, or ſeed time; and that men ſhall reap in a future ſtate, according to what they do in this life. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: For whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap. For he that ſoweth to his fleſh, ſhall of the fleſh reap corruption: But he that ſoweth to the ſpirit, ſhall of the ſpirit reap life everlaſting."* This life is repreſented, as the only time to lay up a treaſure in heaven; to make to ourſelves friends, ſo as to be received into everlaſting habitations, when we fail here, when this life ends: To make our peace with God, which Chriſt repreſents and urges, by agreeing with our adverſary, while we are in the way with him, otherwiſe we ſhall be caſt into priſon, from whence there is no deliverance. And he repreſents Lazarus and the rich man, as *fixed*, the former in a ſtate of happineſs, and the latter in a ſtate of miſery, immediately upon their going out of this world. And it is ſaid, "It is appointed to men once to die, but after this the judgment."† And if nothing were ſaid, relating to this point but the following words, it is fixed in them, beyond a doubt. "We muſt all appear before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt; that every one may receive *the things done in*

* Gal. vi, 7, 8. † Heb, ix. 27.

his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."* If at the final judgment, when the endleſs ſtate of men will be fixed, they ſhall be judged according to what they have done in the body: Then this life is the only time of probation, and in the body they fix their character and ſtate for eternity.

The time of man's death, and the way and means by which the ſoul ſhall be ſeparated from the body, are all hidden from man. He is expoſed to death as ſoon as he begins to exiſt in the body, and knows not how ſoon it may come; and no circumſtances, nor any thing he can do, or that others can do for him, can ſecure him from death a moment. This is wiſely ordered ſo, and anſwers many good ends, which it is needleſs particularly to mention here.

Death is not a calamity, but a great benefit to the redeemed. It has no ſting for them, but comes to them as a friend, by which they are delivered from all moral and natural evil, and become perfectly holy, and enter upon a life unſpeakably better than to live here in the body. Therefore, the Apoſtle Paul, had a deſire to depart, to die, and be with Chriſt, *which was far better.* And he conſidered the death of his body, as his great gain.† "Precious in the ſight of the Lord, is the death of his ſaints."‡ Which denotes that it is an important, and deſirable change, by which he is glorified, and their good is promoted. Chriſt has taken away the ſting of death to them, and gives them the victory over it, which he will complete at the general reſurrection. In the proſpect of this, chriſtians may now ſay, "O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory? The ſting of death is ſin; and the ſtrength of ſin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt."§

Death

* 2 Cor. v. 10. † Phil. i. 21, 23.
‡ Pſal. cxvi. 15. §1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57.

Death is juſtly terrible, and a dreadful evil, to thoſe who are in their ſins. It deprives them of all good: It puts an end to their probation ſtate, and to all hope, and fixes them in a ſtate of ſin, deſpair and endleſs miſery. This is neceſſarily implied in the words juſt cited. "The ſting of death is ſin; and the ſtrength of ſin is the law." Death could have no ſting, by ſin or the law, more than any other change or event in life, if it did not fix the curſe of the law upon the ſinner, when he dies, and put an end to his probation and hope. The ſting of death, is the evil which ſin deſerves, and which the law denounces, which is the ſecond death. The death of the body fixes this ſting in the ſinner's heart, which is endleſs deſtruction.

A SEPARATE STATE.

II. THAT the ſoul does not die with the body, but exiſts in a ſeparate ſtate, till the general reſurrection of all the bodies of men which have died, has been ſuppoſed in what has been ſaid on the death of the body; and is aſſerted or implied, in ſeveral paſſages of ſcripture, which have been mentioned under the foregoing head: But this requires a diſtinct, and more particular conſideration. And that the ſoul or ſpirit of man does not die, or go into a ſtate of inſenſibility, when the body is turned to duſt, is made evident and certain, by many other paſſages of ſcripture, which have not been yet mentioned. The promiſe of Chriſt, to the penitent, believing thief on the croſs, proves that the death of his body did not put an end to his exiſtence or ſenſibility. "And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Verily I ſay unto thee, To day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe."* The word paradiſe, was uſed

* Luke xxviii. 43.

uſed by the Jews, at that day, for heaven, or a ſtate of happineſs. The ſoul of this man was not injured by the death of his body; but he exiſted in a ſtate of greater ſenſibility and enjoyment, than when united with the body, and went directly to heaven; nor is there the leaſt evidence, that this is not equally true of every believer, when his body dies. Stephen, the firſt martyr, expected and prayed for this, when his body was dying. "And they ſtoned Stephen, calling upon God, and ſaying, *Lord Jeſus receive my ſpirit.*"* And none can doubt that the Redeemer was as ready to grant his petition, as that of the thief.

The Apoſtle Paul expected the ſame, and ſpeaks of it as certain, that when his body died, and he ſhould be no longer in this world, he ſhould be in heaven with Chriſt. "For me to live is Chriſt, and to die is gain. I am in a ſtrait betwixt two, having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better."† He did not conſider himſelf as dying with the body; but when that died, and he left this world, he expected to depart, and be with Chriſt in heaven. And he could not mean his being with Chriſt, after the reſurrection; for he puts his continuing in the body, and abiding longer in this world, in oppoſition to his being with Chriſt; which could not be true on that ſuppoſition: For he would be with Chriſt as ſoon, though he ſhould live an hundred years longer in the body, as if he died immediately. And he would gain nothing, in this reſpect, by dying; and therefore, it could not be *far better* than to live longer in the body. And he expreſſes the ſame ſentiment, with regard to others as well as himſelf, in the following words. "We know that if our earthly houſe of this tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Therefore, we are always confident

* Acts vii. 59. † Phil. i. 21. 23.

confident (or courageous) knowing that while we are at home (or ſojourn) in the body, we are abſent from the Lord. We are confident (courageous) I ſay, and willing, rather *to be abſent from the body, and to be preſent with the Lord.*"* Here he conſiders, being preſent with the Lord, or being with Chriſt, as taking place, in conſequence of death, or being abſent from the body; ſo that when ſeparated from the body, they ſhall be with Chriſt, in a ſenſe and degree which cannot take place while in the body: And theſe two ſtates are oppoſed to each other. And he ſays, they *knew* that when they ſhould die, or their body be diſſolved, they ſhould be in heaven.

This ſame Apoſtle, ſuppoſes he could exiſt, perceive, think and enjoy to a high degree, when out of his body, or abſent from it, when he ſpeaks of the viſions and revelations which he had, when carried to heaven; and ſays he could not tell whether he was in the body, or out of it, and ſeparate from it: For if the ſoul could not exiſt, perceive and enjoy, when ſeparate from the body, he could have known that he was not out of the body, but in it, when he had thoſe revelations, perceptions and exerciſes.† And he ſpeaks of "The ſpirits of juſt men, made perfect," as being then in heaven, with the holy angels, and with Jeſus Chriſt; by which he expreſsly aſſerts a ſeparate ſtate, and that the ſpirits of the juſt, when the body dies, are made perfect in holineſs, and go to heaven, to be with Chriſt, and the happy inhabitants of the inviſible world.‡ The ſouls of the martyrs, are repreſented as exiſting in a ſtate of ſenſibility, happineſs and honour, in a ſeparate ſtate, after their bodies had been ſlain.§ And the dead, who die in Chriſt, are declared to be bleſſed, and to be received to a ſtate of happineſs and rewards.‖ The Apoſtle Peter, ſpeaks of the ſpirits of thoſe who periſhed by the flood, as exiſting when he

* 2. Cor. v. 1, 6, 8. † 2 Cor. xii. 1, 2, 3.
‡ Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. § Rev. vi. 9, 10, 11. ‖ Chap. xiv. 13.

he wrote, and being in prison.* And Christ proves to the Sadducees, that the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had an existence, and were not dead, long after they had left this world, and their bodies were turned to dust.†

These passages of scripture, it is presumed, are sufficient to convince every honest unprejudiced mind, that the soul exists separate from the body, in the invisible world, from the death of the body, till the general resurrection; notwithstanding the attempts which have been made, by those who deny a separate state, to put a meaning on them, so as to make them consistent with such denial.

And the account which the scripture gives of this matter, is very agreeable to reason, and all the appearances, relating to it. It is very unreasonable to suppose that the Redeemer, who by his power and grace, has made them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, or the holy inhabitants in heaven, should so order it, that death should put an end to their existence, till their bodies are raised to life, so as to have no perception, exercise, or enjoyment, during that interval of time; and deprive them of all that holiness and happiness which they might enjoy, during that time, with him, in his kingdom; especially since by becoming his friends, in this world, they are formed to the greatest aversion to falling into such a state; and have strong and unconquerable desires, to live, and be with Christ; and in the company of his friends and servants, in the invisible world. For all true christians have the same desires which Stephen expressed, when dying, "Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit." And which the Apostle Paul said, he had: "For I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better." And this would not be agreeable to the tender love which he expressed to his disciples

* 2 Peter iii. 19, 20. † Matth. xxii. 31, 32.

disciples and friends, when on earth. He said to them, "In my Father's house, are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."* "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant also be."† When he says, "Let him follow me," he has reference to the death of the body, which appears from the context; q. d. Let him follow me through death, as I am to die; and then he shall be with me in heaven. Agreeable to his prayer for his friends, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." How inconsistent is this, with his excluding them from heaven, thousands of years, from the death of their bodies, to the general resurrection, when he is able to introduce them there, to be with him, as soon as the body dies!

While the soul is in the body, by virtue of a union, which God has constituted, it is dependent on that, in a measure, for its perceptions and sensible exercises; and is affected with the disorders of it, in such a manner, as to be an argument with some, that the soul is not capable of perception and reason, except it be in union with a proper organized body; and therefore must die with the body, and cannot exist in a separate state. But this fact and appearance, is not a sufficient ground for such a consequence. It is proper and wise, that the body should have such an influence and effect on the mind, while in this state, and one is so closely united with the other.—And God, who has ordered this, when the ends of this constitution are answered, can as easily cause the soul to exist, perceive, reason and act, separate from the body, as

* John xiv. 2, 3. † Chap. xii. 26.

as now he does in union with the body: And make it to act in a more perfect manner, and have more clear and extensive views, and higher enjoyments. There is nothing contrary to reason and experience in this.

When the souls of the redeemed leave the body, they are delivered from all sinful imperfection, and made perfectly holy; and find themselves with Jesus Christ, and in the company of the holy inhabitants of heaven. This is a very great change indeed; but not too great to be effected by him who has all power in heaven and earth, and is therefore *omnipotent*, and is infinitely wise. We are ignorant of the particular manner in which the spirits of the just, perceive and act in a separate state; or how, and by what means they have intercourse with other spirits, by receiving and mutually communicating ideas and sentiments: But this does not afford the least argument, that there can be no such thing; and that it does not take place in much higher perfection, and to greater advantage, than any thing we know of the kind, in this state. The illiterate barbarian, has no conception of the manner and convenience, or even the possibility of persons exchanging ideas, and conversing by letters. He may as reasonably infer from this, that there can be no such thing; as we can, that separate spirits do not perceive, converse, act and enjoy, in a much more perfect manner than we do, because we cannot tell how, and in what way this can be done.

When the spirits of the just, are separated from the body, the world which to us is invisible, opens to their view. They find themselves unconfined, surrounded with the most pleasing objects, and the best company, enjoying the serene, bright light of heavenly day, where there is no darkness, no sin, or sorrow. They are set at liberty, to range without restraint in the regions of bliss, while their views, exercises and enjoyments are high, and

increased

increaſed to a degree, far beyond our conception. They are, in this reſpect, like a bird, liberated from a cage, in which it has been long confined, and now flies, and ſports unconfined in the open light and air. Or like one who has been long ſhut up in a dark, uncomfortable priſon, and is now ſet at liberty; enjoys the pleaſing light of day, is ſurrounded by his friends, and has all the enjoyments and comforts of life.

And by going to heaven, they do not get out of the ſight and knowledge of this world, and the important affairs which Jeſus Chriſt is carrying on here. We are told in divine revelation, that the angels of heaven are all attention to the things which concern the work of redemption; and that they are all actively engaged in promoting this deſign among men, and miniſtring to them who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation. And that there is joy in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth. There muſt therefore be in heaven, where the ſpirits of the juſt are, with the angels, a very particular knowledge of the events which take place in this world; and a much more clear and certain knowledge of the ſtate of the church of Chriſt, and the converſion of ſinners, than any have while in the body. The ſpirits of departed ſaints, have the intereſt of Chriſt, and his church in this world, as much at heart, as they had when in the body, and much more; and therefore muſt be greatly attentive to it, and know all the events which are in favour of it. They do not go into ſome dark corner of the univerſe, out of ſight of heaven, of Chriſt, his church, and this world; but when they leave the body, they riſe into light, and take a ſtation, in which they are under advantages to ſee all theſe things, and all worlds, being all attention to them, and having a perfect diſcerning, without the leaſt cloud or darkneſs; ſeeing and enjoying the glory of the Redeemer, and the proſperity and ſucceſs of the work of redemp-

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tion among men. And their happineſs muſt increaſe, as the cauſe of Chriſt advances on earth, and the power and kingdom of ſatan ſinks, and is deſtroyed; and as the powers of their minds, and their knowledge are enlarged.

They are delivered from all ſin and pain, upon paſſing into the inviſible world, and are therefore, perfectly happy; but at the day of judgment, when they ſhall be reunited to their bodies, fitted for a heavenly ſtate, their happineſs will be increaſed, which therefore they are expecting with deſire and joy.

The ſpirits of thoſe who die in their ſins, paſs into a ſtate of darkneſs, deſpair, and tormenting wickedneſs; and all hope, comfort, and enjoyment, being taken from them, they muſt be totally loſt and overwhelmed in miſery; yet looking forward to a reſurrection and judgment to come, with averſion and dread, as involving a great increaſe of their ſufferings, which can have no end.—Theſe are the *ſpirits in priſon*, of which the Apoſtle Peter ſpeaks, who are reſerved to the general judgment, when each one ſhall receive according to what he has done in the body.

THE GENERAL RESURRECTION.

III. THE General Reſurrection will put an end to the ſeparate ſtate. When the bodies of all who ſhall have died from the beginning of the world, to that time, will be raiſed, and come forth, in union with the ſouls which had been ſeparated from them by death. This will take place when Jeſus Chriſt ſhall come to judgment. This is frequently ſpoken of in the ſcriptures, and expreſsly aſſerted, in more places than it is needful to mention here, for thoſe who read the Bible. Our Saviour ſays, "The hour is coming, in the which, all that are in the

the graves, ſhall hear his voice, and ſhall come forth, they that have done good, unto the reſurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the reſurrection of damnation.* When the Apoſtle John, had a viſion of the general judgment, the general reſurrection is connected with it. "And I ſaw the dead, ſmall and great, ſtand before God, and the ſea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: And they were judged every man according to their works."† The Apoſtle Paul treats particularly of the reſurrection of the bodies of the redeemed, as an important and eſſential doctrine of chriſtianity.‡

We depend entirely upon divine revelation, for the notice and knowledge of this doctrine of a future reſurrection; as it could not be known by any other means. But when we find it revealed, it does not appear contrary to reaſon; but is agreeable to the dictates of it; and in no reſpect incredible, if the account the ſcripture gives of it, be properly conſidered, and underſtood. There were indeed, ſome profeſſing chriſtians in the Apoſtle's days, as there have been ſince, who denied this doctrine. This was the occaſion of St. Paul's writing ſo particularly and lengthy upon it, in the chapter juſt now quoted. This doctrine was thought incredible, impoſſible and ridiculous, by the heathen philoſophers, and others, in the days of Chriſt and his Apoſtles. And this ſame incredulity has been tranſmitted down to this day, among thoſe, who pay little or no regard to the Bible. They ſay, it is impoſſible, that all the ſame bodies which have died, ſhould be ever recovered and raiſed again. It is not thought neceſſary to ſtate their objections, and anſwer them here, as this has been done over and over again, by many able writers. It will be ſufficient to obſerve, that the remark which Chriſt made upon the Sadducees,

* John v. 28, 29. † Rev. xx. 12, 13. ‡ 1 Cor. xv.

ducees, who denied this doctrine, as impoſſible, is applicable to them, viz. That they do greatly err, becauſe they do not believe, or underſtand the ſcriptures; nor the power of God. When they can tell, in what *identity* conſiſts, and what is neceſſary in order to conſtitute the reſurrection body the *ſame*, with that to which the ſoul was united in this life; and what omnipotence, and infinite knowledge and wiſdom can do, and cannot do, with reſpect to this; and can prove that the Bible is not a revelation from God; then let them undertake to prove, that the doctrine of a general reſurrection of the ſame bodies which have died, or ſhall die, to the end of the world, is impoſſible or incredible.

The reſurrection bodies of the redeemed, will be beautiful and glorious, far beyond our preſent conception: They will be like the glorified body of the Redeemer; every way fitted for a ſtate of immortality, conſtant activity, and perfect happineſs, as the eternal monuments of the power, wiſdom and goodneſs of Chriſt. They will have no defect, but be perfectly ſuited to accommodate and furniſh the holy ſoul, to all that activity, work and enjoyment, which are implied in a ſtate of perfect happineſs. This is called in ſcripture, a *ſpiritual body*; which ſome have thought to be a contradiction. It is indeed beyond our comprehenſion. But where is the inconſiſtence or impropriety, in calling that a ſpiritual body, which is ſo much unlike any body which we know, or of which we can have any adequate idea, that it is perfectly ſuited to promote the perceptions, activity and enjoyment of a holy mind, and anſwer every deſirable end, with reſpect to all external objects?

The bodies of thoſe who died in their ſins, will be an awful contraſt to thoſe of the redeemed. "They will riſe "To ſhame and everlaſting contempt."* They will

* Dan. xii. 2.

will be every way ſuited to the ſouls which are wholly ſinful, and enemies to God, prepared for condemnation, deſpair and endleſs deſtruction.

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

IV. THAT there will be a General Judgment, when all moral agents, angels and men, good and bad, ſhall give an account of themſelves, of their moral character and conduct, to God their Judge, and receive of him, and be treated by him, according to what they are, and as their moral conduct has been, while in a ſtate of trial, is expreſsly and abundantly aſſerted in the ſcriptures. And this appears reaſonable, deſirable and important, to all who have any proper conceptions of moral government, and are friends to it.

The preciſe time, when the day of judgment ſhall commence, is fixed, and Jeſus Chriſt the Redeemer, is appointed to be the Judge of all. This he commanded the Apoſtles to publiſh, in preaching his goſpel to the world, as Peter declares. "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and teſtify, that it is He which was ordained of God, to be the Judge of quick and dead."* The Apoſtle Paul, therefore, kept this in view, in his preaching and letters. In his diſcourſe to the aſſembly at Athens, he introduces this, as an important article. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at: But now commandeth all men, every where, to repent: Becauſe he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead."† And when he ſpoke before Felix, concerning the faith

* Acts x. 42. † Acts xvii. 31, 39.

in Chriſt, "he reaſoned of righteouſneſs, temperance, and *a judgment to come.*"* And he often brought this into view in his letters. He ſays, "We ſhall all ſtand before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt. So then, every one of us ſhall give account of himſelf to God."† "Therefore, judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and will make manifeſt the counſels of the hearts: and then ſhall every man have praiſe of God. For we muſt all appear before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."‡ "I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing, and kingdom."§

Jeſus Chriſt is the appointed Judge. This appears wiſe and deſirable; that he who is God manifeſt in the fleſh, and by this medium, and in this ſenſe, the viſible God, ſhould take this high, and infinitely important and honourable ſtation, and decide the character and eternal ſtate of all moral agents, eſpecially of man. This will be a bright and glorious manifeſtion of Deity in the human nature, when he ſhall come in the glory of the Father, with all the ſignals of divinity, attended with all the holy angels; and ſhall raiſe the bodies of all the dead, and ſummon all before him as their final judge, taking upon him an office and buſineſs, infinitely too high and great for a mere creature. This will ſtrike conviction into the mind of every intelligent creature, that he is really God and man. And it is highly proper and important, that he who ſtooped ſo low, and took upon him the form of a ſervant, and ſubmitted to reproach and contempt, and to die an ignominious and cruel death, by the

* Acts xxiv. 25. † Rom. xiv. 10, 11, 12.
‡ 1 Cor. iv. 5. 2 Cor. v. 10. § 2 Tim. iv. 1.

the hands of wicked men, for the ſalvation of ſinners, ſhould be thus rewarded and honoured; and every knee be made to bow to him, as God, and their final Judge.* Nothing could be more pleaſing, and give greater joy and happineſs to the redeemed, and the holy angels, than to have the Redeemer thus exalted and honoured as the Judge of all; and nothing more diſagreeable and confounding to devils and wicked men.

The place in which the General Judgment will be attended, will be ſuch as ſhall be in the beſt manner ſuited to ſuch a tranſaction; to accommodate the Judge, and all concerned in the buſineſs of that important ſolemn day. It will be ſo contrived and ſituated, that every one of the vaſt aſſembly, which ſhall then be collected, will be under advantage to ſee the Judge, and all that is done, and hear every word that ſhall be ſpoken by the Judge, or by any one elſe, through the whole proceſs. The Apoſtle Paul ſays, "The Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from heaven, with a ſhout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: And the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt: Then we which are alive, and remain, ſhall be caught up, together with them, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord."† It hence appears, that this ſcene will not be on this earth, but in ſome more convenient place, which ſhall be fixed and formed for that purpoſe; which Chriſt, by whom all worlds were made, can effect at once, with infinite eaſe. It is not certain, from the Apoſtle's mentioning clouds, and the air, that it will be in the atmoſphere of this earth; for if this be meant by the air here, which is not certain, though the redeemed ſhall meet Chriſt in our atmoſphere, this may be, that they may accompany him to ſome other more diſtant place, where the judgment ſhall be, and to which all intelligent creatures in the univerſe will be brought.

* Phil. ii. 8—11. † 1 Theſ. iv. 16, 17.

The deſign of the General Judgment, is not to inform the Judge, that he may know the character and actions of all, ſo as to be able to pronounce a proper and righteous ſentence upon them; for he is omniſcient. But it is to make known to creatures, upon what grounds he proceeds in giving rewards, and inflicting puniſhment; that all may be under the beſt advantage, to ſee and approve the righteouſneſs and propriety of the final ſentence. Therefore, in the ſcripture it is called "The day of *the revelation of the righteous judgment* of God."* In order to this, the moral character of every one, will be laid open, and ſet in a true and clear light, ſo that all the ſpectators ſhall be under the beſt advantage to ſee it. Every ſingle perſon muſt be called forth, and take his turn to be ſcrutinized; and all he has done, whether ſecretly or more openly, will be made manifeſt to all creatures, while all attend to every particular; for there will not be one inattentive ſpectator there. All diſguiſe and hypocriſy will be detected; and every exerciſe of heart, and outward action, with the motive and deſign, will be made to appear in a true light. In this the ſcripture is very expreſs. "For God will bring *every work* into judgment, with *every ſecret thing*, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."† "There is nothing covered that ſhall not be revealed, neither hid, that ſhall not be known. Therefore, whatſoever ye have ſpoken in darkneſs, ſhall be heard in the light: And that which ye have ſpoken in the ear in cloſets, ſhall be proclaimed upon the houſe tops. I ſay unto you, that every idle word that men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give account thereof in the day of judgment."‡ "In the day when God ſhall judge *the ſecrets of men* by Jeſus Chriſt, according to my goſpel. Therefore, judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs,

* Rom. ii. 5. † Eccl. xii. 14. ‡ Matth. xii. 36. Luke xii. 2, 3.

neſs, and make manifeſt the counſels of the hearts."* "So then every one of us ſhall give account of himſelf to God."† "And they were judged *every man* according to his works."‡

It hence appears, that the day of judgment, will not be finiſhed in the ſpace of a natural day of twenty four hours; but the proceſs may continue and go on during the term of many thouſand years, much longer than from the creation to the commencement of that day; though days and years, and time, as we now meaſure it, will then be at an end; yet there will be a ſucceſſion of events, and of ideas and perceptions, among creatures; and this muſt continue without end. And it muſt take time, as we now term it, and conceive of it, for creatures to recollect and take a particular view, of every character that has exiſted; of all that has been done, ſecretly or openly, by every particular perſon, of angels, devils and men, from the beginning of the world, to that time: Even though the exhibition ſhall be made in the beſt and moſt advantageous manner, and creatures ſhall be able to think and receive ideas, with much greater celerity, than men can in this ſtate. Solomon ſeems to have reference to this long duration of the day of judgment, in the following words. "I ſaid in my heart, God ſhall judge the righteous and the wicked: For there is a time there, for every purpoſe, and for every work."§ That is, however long a term, it may take, to bring every purpoſe, and every work of men into view, ſo as to judge them according to their works, yet time will not be wanting; and God will take time enough for it.

In this tranſaction, it may be ſuppoſed, the Redeemer will give, or cauſe to be exhibited, the beſt, moſt perfect, and entertaining hiſtory of mankind, and of all intelligences, without the leaſt error, or miſrepreſentation, including

* Rom. ii. 16. 1 Cor. iv. 5. † Rom. xiv. 12.
‡ Rev. xx. 13. § Eccl. iii. 17.

cluding all the thoughts, exercises and actions of moral agents, all their motives and designs in external conduct, with respect to God, and creatures; all their enjoyments and sufferings, and every event which relates to them; including the designs, agency and conduct of God, with respect to them; and the ends answered thereby: By which one connected, important scene, will rise into view, and be seen, from the beginning to the end, comprehending all the sins, and all the virtue and holiness, that have taken place among creatures, together with the superintending hand of God, in every thing; his decrees and designs; his universal energy, and governing providence, wisely conducting every thing, and all events, to bring them to their intended issue: By which his power, wisdom, righteousness, goodness, truth and faithfulness, shall be set in the clearest light. And as the scene proceeds, in this divine exhibition, and history, which the Redeemer will give; all his friends will be entertained and gratified, in a very high degree, and their enjoyment and happiness will rise, and be on the increase, from the beginning to the end; however long it shall continue.

On the other hand, it will be a most distressing and dreadful scene to the enemies of Christ, both devils and wicked men; and their pain and torment will increase from the beginning, till the infinitely dreadful sentence is passed upon them, "Depart from me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And while they hear the blessed sentence pronounced, inviting the righteous into the eternal kingdom of God, and see them received there; this will increase their misery and torment, to an unspeakable degree, which never can be abated. At the same time, the enjoyment and happiness of the blessed, will rise to an inconceivable height, which will continue and increase without end.

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The redeemed will not be publicly juſtified, and received to eternal life, becauſe of their obedience to the law of God; for if treated according to that, they would be found guilty, and muſt be curſed. But Chriſt is the end of the law for righteouſneſs, to them; and they will be judged according to the goſpel, as friends to Chriſt, and believers in him; ſince God can be juſt, and yet publicly juſtify every one who is publicly known to be a believer in Chriſt. And when it is ſaid, that every one ſhall be judged, and ſhall receive according to his works, which he has done in the body, in this life, the goſpel is ſuppoſed, and kept in view; and very one, who ſhall, by ſetting the whole of his character and works in clear and public ſight, appear to be a friend to Chriſt, and united to him, ſhall, on this account, and according to the goſpel, be publicly juſtified, and rewarded with eternal life, which he could not be, if treated according to the law of works. And they who ſhall be found not to be friends to Chriſt, while in this world, ſhall be condemned, and fall under the curſe of the law. This is agreeable to the repreſentation which Chriſt gives of the general judgment.* And the Apoſtle Paul, ſets it in the ſame light.†

It has been a queſtion, Whether the ſins of the redeemed would be brought into view, and laid open before all intelligences, at the day of judgment; or would be covered and kept out of ſight? And different opinions have been entertained of this. But it is thought, if the matter be properly conſidered, it will be evident that all their ſins will be brought into view, and laid open before all; and that it will appear that there is not any evidence from the ſcripture, that their ſins will be concealed; but the contrary. It is indeed ſaid in ſcripture, that the ſins, of the people of God, ſhall be

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* Matth. xxv. 31, &c. † 2 Theſſ. i. 7, 8, 9, 10.

blotted out, covered, caſt into the depths of the ſea, and *remembered no more.** But theſe are metaphorical expreſſions, to denote the free and full pardon of all their ſins, ſo that they ſhould never be remembered againſt them, ſo as to condemn them to ſuffer the juſt conſequence of them; but they ſhall be treated as well as if they never had been guilty of one ſin. It cannot be true, that God will remember their ſins no more, in any other ſenſe; for it is impoſſible he ſhould forget them, or any thing elſe. This has been already obſerved, in the ſection on Juſtification.

1. That the ſins of the redeemed, ſhould not be brought into view, at the day of judgment, appears contrary to the expreſs declaration of ſcripture, which has been mentioned. It is ſaid, "God will bring every work into judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Which cannot be conſiſtent with paſſing over and concealing all the ſins of the redeemed.

2. It appears impoſſible, that their ſins ſhould be concealed, conſiſtent with the ſins of the wicked, being fully laid open; for believers and unbelievers, are ſo many ways connected, that the thoughts and conduct of the latter, cannot be fully diſcovered, without making known the ſins of the former, at leaſt in many inſtances; of which every one muſt be ſenſible, who attends to the matter. For inſtance, is it not impoſſible that all the ſins of an unbelieving huſband, ſhould be clearly diſcovered in all their circumſtances and aggravations, while all the ſins of his believing wife, are wholly concealed; which were the occaſion of many of his ſins, and to which they have a particular reference?

3. The holy exerciſes and good works of the ſaved cannot be ſet in a true and juſt light, without diſcovering their

* Iſaiah xliii. 25. Pſal. xxxii. 1. Jer. xxxi. 34. Mich. vii. 19.

their ſinful infirmities and defects, at leaſt, with which they have all been attended; and their ſins have been the occaſion, and reaſon of their gracious exerciſes, in many inſtances. How can their repentance of their ſins be diſcovered, and clearly ſeen, while the ſins of which they repent, are wholly concealed? How can their humility, and their humbling themſelves in the ſight of the Lord, be diſcovered, unleſs the ſins for which they humble themſelves, be known? How ſhall their love and faithfulneſs, in reproving a believing brother for his ſins, and their labours and prayers for him, which have been the means of his recovery, reformation, and ſalvation, be made known, without diſcovering the ſins of that brother? And how can their truſt in Chriſt, for the pardon of their ſins, and their penitent confeſſions of their ſins, be diſcovered, without, at the ſame time, diſcovering their ſins, to which theſe exerciſes have reference, and without which they would not be virtuous or reaſonable, or even intelligible? In ſhort, all the holy exerciſes and works of a chriſtian, take their particular complexion, and peculiar beauty, from their ſins, of which they were guilty, before converſion, and afterwards, which cannot be ſeen any farther than their ſins come into view.

4. Many ſins of the redeemed, have been already publiſhed to the world, in divine revelation; and will be known by all who read the Bible, to the end of the world; and at the day of judgment; and will forever be known and remembered by all the redeemed; by all the angels and devils, and by many, if not by all wicked men. The reader will recollect many more inſtances of this, than Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Moſes, Aaron, David, Solomon, Peter, and the reſt of the Apoſtles: And the Apoſtle Paul, took pains to keep in view and publiſh his great wickedneſs, before his converſion. God has ordered all theſe to be publiſhed: And therefore we know it is wiſe

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and beſt that they ſhould not be concealed, but made known; and that this will anſwer ſome important, good end. And who can ſay, that God will not publiſh all the ſins of every one of the redeemed, at the day of judgment; and that this will not be neceſſary to anſwer ſome important ends? This leads to another particular.

5. It ſeems neceſſary, that the ſins of the ſaved ſhould be known and publiſhed, in order to diſcover and ſet in the moſt clear light, the goodneſs and grace of God, in pardoning and ſaving them; and that their need of a Redeemer, and the efficacy of his atonement and righteouſneſs, ſhould be ſeen to the greateſt advantage: And the work of the Holy Spirit, in his effectually applying redemption to them, and ſubduing ſuch rebels, cannot be otherwiſe fully revealed, in every particular inſtance. Of this, every one muſt be ſenſible, who will reflect on the ſubject. There is doubtleſs, ſomething peculiar, in the character of each one of the redeemed, with reſpect to his guilt, the circumſtances and aggravations of his ſins, and the manner in which he is brought to repentance, &c. which ſerves to illuſtrate the ſovereign grace of God, in his pardon and redemption; and it is ſo ordered, that he ſhould ſin in juſt ſuch a manner and degree, and in ſuch particular circumſtances, to anſwer ſome end; and particularly this, that God might be more glorified, in the exerciſe of his ſovereign, wiſe, wonderful goodneſs and grace, in his pardon and ſalvation.—But in order to this, the particular ſins, the guilt, and circumſtances in which he ſinned, muſt be known; and muſt be known to all, in order to the greateſt and moſt public diſplay of ſovereign grace, in his pardon and ſalvation, that all may glorify God, and give thanks, and praiſe him, on his behalf. This leads to another obſervation.

6. Every

6. Every one of the redeemed, ardently desires, that God may have all the praise and glory of his pardoning mercy, and sovereign grace, exercised towards him, in his pardon and salvation; and the more this is known and celebrated, the more pleased he will be. But this cannot be known, it cannot be seen what God has done for *him* in particular, any farther than his sins, with their circumstances and particular aggravations, are published and known. Therefore, it will be so far from being undesirable to him, or giving him the least uneasiness, to have his sins, with all their aggravations, most particularly, and clearly laid open before all; that they may see his guilt, and the odiousness of his character, as he does; that it will give him a peculiar satisfaction, and high degree of pleasure; as it will promote the happiness of all his friends, and be matter of their gratitude and praise to God, for his sovereign grace, exercised and manifested in his pardoning and saving such a sinner; and God will have all the praise and glory.

Where is there a real christian now, who, when he reflects on his amazing guilt and vileness, the multitude and aggravations of his sins, his desert, and danger of perishing forever, which has been prevented purely by the sovereign grace of God, exercised in all wisdom and prudence, towards him, in pardoning, rescuing, and saving him, who does not say, at least, in his heart, "Let God have all the praise and glory of his rich and sovereign grace, exercised towards me, in pardoning *such a sinner*, so infinitely guilty and vile, attended with such particular aggravations. Let all heaven, the angels, and all the redeemed, know what God has done for me, and praise him forever." In this view, he desires and wishes that his case might be particularly and fully known to all, that they all might join with him, in giving praise and glory to God. And at the day of judgment, this dis-

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poſition and deſire, will be ſtronger and perfect; and he will, by having all his ſins ſet in order, and in the cleareſt light before him, and all creatures, have a more clear and enlarged view himſelf, of the multitude and greatneſs of his ſins, than he ever had before, and of the wonderful mercy of God, in pardoning him, and of the boundleſs ſufficiency of the atonement of Chriſt, and of his merit, by which he has obtained forgiveneſs of all his ſins, and complete ſalvation. This will prepare him to be highly gratified, and exceedingly rejoice, that the whole is now brought out and made known to all the friends of God, that they may all be under the beſt advantage to join with him, in giving all the praiſe and glory to God and the Saviour, of his unbounded love, and ſovereign grace, in which he hath abounded towards him, in all wiſdom and prudence, In this view, he cannot deſire to have one of his ſins concealed, for which Chriſt has atoned, and which is pardoned; and would not have his ſins in general ſecreted, on any conſideration.

In a word, Jeſus Chriſt is the Redeemer of SINNERS; he came into the world to ſave *ſinners*, even the chief of ſinners. This is his work, and in this is his glory: That the redeemed are ſinners, muſt therefore be known at the day of judgment, in order to his having the glory of their ſalvation. And the more clearly their true character is ſeen, and their ſins, in their number and aggravations are diſcovered, the more will Chriſt be glorified in their ſalvation. Therefore, the brighteſt poſſible diſcovery will be made of this by him, at the day of judgment. And by this the redeemed will be gratified and pleaſed, to a high degree. It will appear, at that day, that the redeemed are not ſaved, becauſe they deſerve ſuch favour, or are leſs unworthy, or leſs ſinners than others; but becauſe Chriſt loved them, and gave himſelf for them, and they are united to him, and have put their truſt in him

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for pardon, righteouſneſs and complete redemption. And though they may then appear to have been greater ſinners, and more illdeſerving, than thoſe who periſh; as doubtleſs many, if not all of them will; and their greateſt crimes will appear to be thoſe, which they committed after their converſion; yet this will not hinder their juſtification and ſalvation, or render it in the leaſt degree improper, more than if they were leſs ſinners; but the Redeemer will be hereby more glorified in the ſalvation of *ſuch ſinners*, and they will be the more happy. For they, to whom moſt is forgiven, will love the moſt.

Though the Redeemer has not altered the nature of ſin, or rendered it leſs odious and criminal, either in the redeemed, or in thoſe who periſh; but much more ſo; yet he overrules it, and turns it to his own glory, and the glory of his kingdom; and makes the ſins of thoſe who are ſaved, the occaſion of their greater holineſs and happineſs forever.

When every character of thoſe who are to be judged, ſhall be ſet in the cleareſt light, and fixed; and all the paſt conduct and tranſactions in the moral world, both of God and creatures, ſhall be ſet in a clear, connected view; and all creatures ſhall be under the beſt advantage to ſee the righteouſneſs and propriety of the final ſentence, it will be pronounced by the Judge, in the ſight and audience of all. This will be, in ſome reſpects, the moſt ſolemn, weighty, joyful and dreadful ſcene and tranſaction, that had ever taken place: Which will fix the righteous in a ſtate of endleſs, inexpreſſible happineſs and glory: And ſend the wicked away, into inconceivable, eternal miſery. We have a ſummary of this ſentence, on each of theſe, left on record, for our inſtruction and warning, by the Judge himſelf, in his awful repreſentation of the day of judgment, in the xxvth chapter of Matthew.

STATE

STATE OF HAPPINESS OR MISERY.

V. THE General Judgment iſſues in an endleſs State of Happineſs or Miſery, as has been juſt obſerved. Much is ſaid of this endleſs ſtate, both of the happineſs and miſery of it, in the ſcriptures, in the promiſes and threatnings, and declarations there made: But thoſe oppoſite ſtates, both of happineſs and miſery, are more particularly deſcribed in the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, made to the Apoſtle John, for the ſupport and encouragement of chriſtians, and to excite them to faith, reſolution, patience and perſeverance in the ſervice of Chriſt, and a faithful, conſtant adherence to the truths of the goſpel, in the evil times which were to take place, and the oppoſition, and ſufferings to which they are expoſed in this world, and the trials and temptations which await them here.

But with all the inſtruction we have on this ſubject, and the utmoſt attention to it, of which we are capable, our conceptions are dark and low, and fall unſpeakably ſhort of a full, comprehenſive view of the truth. However, the following thoughts will be ſuggeſted, as agreeable to the ſcripture.

Firſt, The righteous will go from the judgment, into the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, where they ſhall enjoy everlaſting life, in a ſtate of unſpeakable happineſs and glory.

Their bodies will be beautiful and glorious, like the body of the glorified Jeſus, active and ſprightly, without the leaſt poſſible wearineſs or decay, by the greateſt, uninterrupted activity; every way ſuited to the employment of ſuch a place and ſtate, which ſhall in no degree confine or impede the mind in its exerciſes and enjoyment; but ſhall greatly aſſiſt and promote theſe: So that the

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ſoul will be invigorated by its union to ſuch a body, and be more happy forever, than it could be in any other ſituation and circumſtances whatever.

There is an external place and city, or kingdom, formed in the greateſt beauty, convenience, and glory, ſuited to be a dwelling for the incarnate SON OF GOD, and the imbodied ſpirits of the redeemed; where every one will be perfectly accommodated, and pleaſed, every circumſtance being anſwerable to his deſires, and ſuited to his employment, and to render him moſt happy. Jeſus Chriſt ſaid to his diſciples, "In my Father's houſe, are many manſions. I go to prepare a place for you."* Though this houſe and kingdom, were made, when the world was created, yet it may be capable of alterations and additions, to increaſe the convenience, beauty and glory of it. When Chriſt aſcended to heaven, in his glorified body, it may be ſuppoſed, the place was, in a degree, fitted up, and better ſuited for the reception and reſidence of the Redeemer, in his glorified body. And after the day of judgment, there will probably be a ſtill farther addition to the beauty and glory of this place, and new accommodations be formed, for the imbodied church of the redeemed; ſo that the place which was always glorious, will then exceed in glory.

The redeemed, thus ſituated, furniſhed and ſurrounded, with every thing convenient and deſirable, there being nothing, nor any circumſtance, which will not be ſuited to give them pleaſure, and furniſh them in the beſt manner for their employment; will be perfectly holy. Every thought, and all their exerciſes and conduct, will be perfectly right, and with the greateſt propriety. They will, by their holy, ardent love, be united to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, by a ſtrong, moſt happy, and everlaſting union. They will behold this God in a full

* John xiv. 2.

blaze

blaze of light. In his light, they ſhall ſee light, and all moral darkneſs ſhall be excluded forever. God and the Lamb, ſhall be the eternal, undiminiſhing light of that holy city. They ſhall ſee his glory without a vail, and enjoy all his beauty and perfection, to the utmoſt of their capacity, with the greateſt aſſurance, that this God, is their God, and will be their friend forever. "The Lamb, who is in the midſt of the throne, ſhall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters."* He will be the great and eternal medium of communications from the Deity, and diſcoveries of his love, perfection and glory; and of their acceſs to God, and enjoyment of him. Their peculiar and cloſe union, and conformity to him, will be the eternal ſource of a high degree of honour and happineſs, which no other creatures can enjoy. They ſhall ſit down with him on his throne, and ſhare with him in all his honour and happineſs, to the utmoſt of their capacity. And what happineſs muſt they enjoy, who love God, and the Redeemer, with all their hearts, with the moſt ſtrong and fervent love of benevolence and complacency, when they ſee how greatly he is glorified, and will be forever, by their redemption and ſalvation! And what joy will they have in praiſing and giving glory to him! And their infinite obligations to him, for redeeming them from ſin and hell, and giving them eternal life, will be felt by them, and be the conſtant, eternal ſource of the ſweeteſt, moſt happifying love of gratitude; and in expreſſing it, they will have the higheſt pleaſure and enjoyment.

They will be moſt happy in the ſociety which they ſhall form, of which every individual will be a member. They will be perfectly united by the ſtrongeſt, moſt ſweet, and everlaſting bond of love, and the happieſt friendſhip, mutually enjoying and rejoicing in the happineſs of each other; each one knowing that every one in this

* Rev. vii. 17.

this great kingdom, is perfectly beautiful and amiable, and a cordial friend to him. And there will doubtleſs be ways of expreſſing their love and friendſhip for each other, in a better and more agreeable way and manner, than we now know, and of which we can now have no conception; by which they will mingle ſouls, with the greateſt freedom and intimacy, having no reſerve, or ſecret, which they cannot with pleaſure impart to each other.

And thoſe who have been intimate friends in this world, and mutual bleſſings to each other, will know one another in heaven; and what has paſſed between them in this life, will be the occaſion of peculiar pleaſure and joy in each other. This appears reaſonable, and may be with certainty inferred from what the Apoſtle Paul ſays to thoſe, of whoſe converſion he had been the inſtrument. He addreſſes them thus, "As you have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye alſo are ours, in the day of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye, in the preſence of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, at his coming. For ye are our glory and joy."*

If there be ſuch peculiar and high ſatisfaction and pleaſure, in chriſtian love and friendſhip, in this imperfect ſtate; how unſpeakable muſt be the enjoyment and happineſs, when thoſe friends meet in heaven; having put off all their imperfection and ſin, and become perfectly beautiful and excellent; formed every way for the higheſt and everlaſting friendſhip, without any thing to keep them at a diſtance, or occaſion any reſerve; but every thing ſuited to their enjoyment of each other, in the moſt exalted, refined friendſhip, in the greateſt intimacy and union of hearts, expreſſing their ſentiments and feelings, with the utmoſt freedom and eaſe, without any danger, or poſſibility of being miſunderſtood! At

* 2 Cor. i. 14. 1. Theſſ. ii. 10, 20.

the ſame time, their hearts glowing with love to Chriſt, in whoſe preſence they are; and who is the author and center of all the love and friendſhip in heaven: And the more they love him, the ſtronger and more ſenſible is their union of hearts to each other, and the greater happineſs they have in their mutual friendſhip.

The church of the redeemed, is the body of Chriſt, of which he is the head: The fulneſs of him who filleth all in all. He is the former of this ſociety and kingdom. And when completed by his hand, it will be as perfect, excellent and glorious, as infinite power, wiſdom and goodneſs, united together, and exerted, will make it.—There will be not one member too many, nor one wanting, in order to make it moſt complete and perfect.—Every one will be fixed in his proper place, and be formed, in all reſpects, ſo as to render the whole the moſt perfect, beautiful, harmonious, and happy ſociety poſſible.

The three Perſons in the Godhead, form an infinitely high, holy, and happy ſociety, the original and perfect pattern of all true love, friendſhip, and happineſs. And the ſociety of the redeemed, the church and kingdom of Chriſt, will be an eternal imitation and image, of the infinitely high and perfect ſociety of the THREE ONE, the *One in Three*, and a moſt beautiful, happy and glorious emanation from him, who neceſſarily exiſts infinitely the moſt beautiful and happy ſociety, without beginning, change or end, being entirely incomprehenſible by creatures. This idea ſeems to be expreſſed by Chriſt, in his prayer to the Father, which will be completely anſwered in heaven. He prays for the elect, in the following words. "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they alſo may be one in us. The glory which thou gaveſt me, I have given to them; that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they

they may be made perfect in one. I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou haſte loved me, may be in them, and I in them."* And the words of the Apoſtle John, if conſidered in their full meaning, ſeem to expreſs the ſame thing. "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. God is love: And he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."† Jeſus Chriſt the Mediator, is the medium by which the ſociety of the redeemed in heaven, will be united to the infinitely more excellent and perfect ſociety, the Eternal Trinity of Perſons, who dwell in the infinitely high and holy place, far beyond the reach or comprehenſion of creatures; from whom the ſame benevolence and ſocial love, is ſhed down through the Mediator, on theſe redeemed ones, forming them into one moſt happy ſociety, in union with the bleſſed Trinity, and ſo as to be a little image of the Deity, the Three in One, and One in Three.

The holy angels belong to this ſociety and kingdom: But though their natural powers be great, and in this reſpect they may be ſuperior to man, they will not be in ſo honourable a ſtation as the redeemed, nor can they enjoy that peculiar happineſs which the latter will have, in conſequence of being redeemed, and ſharing in *redeeming love*, and their near, honourable and happy union to Jeſus Chriſt, by which they are *the bride, the Lamb's wife*. The angels are unſpeakably more happy than they could have been, had there been no Redeemer, and no redemption of ſinners. They are employed and happy in looking into theſe things, and knowing more of God by this mean, and ſeeing his manifold wiſdom, and wonderful goodneſs.‡ They are happy in ſerving Chriſt, in carrying on the work of redeemption, and in miniſtring to the redeemed, and ſerving them; and will doubtleſs be ſo

 forever.

* John xvii. 21, 22, 23, 26. † 1 John iv. 12, 16.

‡ Eph. iii. 10. 1 Peter i. 12.

forever. "Are they not ALL miniſtring ſpirits, ſent forth to miniſter to them, who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation?"* Hence it appears, that man is more of an ultimate end than the angels. The angels were made for man, and not man for the angels. For we may know the end of God in making any creature or thing, by the uſe which he makes of it. However, they are a neceſſary part of this moſt beautiful, happy and glorious ſociety and kingdom, and are in a very honourable ſtation, in ſerving Chriſt and his church.

The happineſs of the redeemed in heaven, will not conſiſt in reſt and indolence, in oppoſition to activity, but the contrary; in activity, and inceſſant, unwearying labour and ſervice, from which they will not ceaſe or reſt. They will join in worſhipping and praiſing the UNDIVIDED THREE, God, and the Lamb, and the Holy Ghoſt; and the Redeemer will find buſineſs and employment for them continually; though we cannot now tell particularly, what it will be. Perhaps there will be public teachers, who will aſſiſt others in their ſpeculations, and in exciting their love and pious affections. Some will have greater abilities than others, and more exiſtence and holineſs, and will be able to aſſiſt and inſtruct them who have leſs. The Apoſtle Paul ſays, there will be a difference between them, as one ſtar differs from another.† They will converſe together with the greateſt pleaſure; ſometimes in larger, and ſometimes in ſmaller companies; and at other times only two together. And doubtleſs ſometimes they will have high enjoyment in converſing with Deity, and with Chriſt, by themſelves alone, in retirement, by meditation and devotion. But with reſpect to theſe particulars, we are in the dark, and unable to determine with certainty. It is enough for us to know, at preſent, that every thing will be ordered, and take place in the beſt manner, for the brighteſt diſplay of the divine

* Heb. i. 14. † 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42.

divine perfections, and the greateſt happineſs of the members of this kingdom; and that each one will be conſtantly active, in that buſineſs which ſhall be moſt proper for him; in which he ſhall take the greateſt pleaſure, and ſhall be moſt for the general good. "Therefore, are they before the throne of God, and ſerve him day and night, in his temple."*

There will be a perfect, uninterrupted harmony and agreement, in this ſociety and kingdom. They will be united, not only in affection, but in ſentiment. They will be perfectly joined together in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgment. Every one will be full of light, according to his capacity and advantages to know; and not one will make any miſtake, or judge wrong, concerning any matter or thing, throughout endleſs ages; for this would be morally wrong or ſinful. None of them will be omniſcient, and ſome may know more than others. But they will paſs no judgment about things, of which they have no evidence, and concerning which they have no knowledge, except it be, that they do not know, and therefore, cannot determine. There will, therefore, be no diſpute and jar in heaven; but every one will be all attention, and all ear, to learn what he does not yet know; and ſuſpend his judgment in every matter, till he has light to decide it perfectly right.

And there will be nothing to offend them, or give them the leaſt uneaſineſs, or one diſagreeable painful idea, thought or ſenſation, to eternity; but every object will excite, or be the occaſion of, the moſt pleaſing ſenſations, and every thought will be attended with extatic delight. All, through which they have paſſed in this world, the ſcene of ſorrow, pain and ſin, will not be forgotten; but their reflection upon it, while it is all in the cleareſt view, will be the occaſion of their greateſt enjoyment and happineſs. The wicked, in a ſtate of ſuffering and

 puniſhment,

* Rev. vii. 15.

puniſhment, will not be out of their ſight; but will be ſeen by all the inhabitants of heaven. "They ſhall be tormented with fire and brimſtone, in the preſence of the holy angels, and in the preſence of the Lamb: And the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up forever and ever."* But this will give them no pain, or one uneaſy thought or ſenſation; but it will be the occaſion of their joy and praiſe.

Not that the miſery of any, in itſelf conſidered, and for its own ſake, will give them pleaſure; but they will have ſuch a conſtant ſenſe of the juſtice, propriety, and neceſſity of their puniſhment, to anſwer the beſt end, for the glory of God, and the general good: That they will, in the full view of this, ſing and ſay, "Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and waſt, and ſhalt be, becauſe thou haſt judged thus; for they are worthy. Even ſo, Lord, God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments."† And this will be the occaſion of exciting and maintaining, in a higher degree, than otherwiſe could be, a ſenſe of the happineſs of the redeemed; and of the ſovereign, diſtinguiſhing goodneſs of God in their ſalvation; and of their indebtedneſs to ſovereign divine grace; which will raiſe their gratitude to the higheſt key: And will keep in conſtant view, the excellence, worthineſs, power and grace of the Redeemer. This is the repreſentation the ſcripture gives. The inhabitants of heaven, rejoice and praiſe God, in full view of the puniſhment of the wicked. "After theſe things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, ſaying, Hallelujah, ſalvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his ſervants at her hand. And again they ſaid, Hallelujah: And her ſmoke roſe up forever and ever. And the

* Rev. xiv. 10, 11. † Rev. xvi. 5, 6, 7.

the four and twenty elders, and the four beaſts, fell down and worſhipped God that ſat on the throne, ſaying, Amen; Hallelujah."*

And reaſon teaches, not only *why* the puniſhment of the wicked will be the occaſion of the greater joy and happineſs of the redeemed, agreeable to this repreſentation of ſcripture; but that it *muſt be ſo*, in order to the perfect happineſs of the inhabitants of heaven. For if this were not, on the whole, all things conſidered, agreeable to them, it muſt be matter of uneaſineſs, and the occaſion of conſtant grief and pain; which would render heaven, in a great meaſure, an unhappy place. It is impoſſible that the wicked ſhould be puniſhed, unleſs God were pleaſed with it: Therefore, ſo far as the inhabitants of heaven will be like God, and be pleaſed with that which is pleaſing to him, this puniſhment will be the occaſion of joy and happineſs to them.

And while they are in the full enjoyment of all this happineſs in heaven, they will have the greateſt aſſurance that it ſhall have no end, but continue forever. Without this, their happineſs would not be complete at any time. For whatever happy circumſtances they were in at preſent, and however happy they might be, the thought that they were liable to loſe it, and having no aſſurance that it ſhould never ceaſe, would be a great alloy to their preſent ejoyment, and be inconſiſtent with their *complete* happineſs. Therefore, the certainty that they ſhall exiſt without end in this ſtate, is a neceſſary ingredient in their felicity, in order to their having fulneſs of joy, at preſent, as well as pleaſures forevermore.

From the nature of the human mind, and the circumſtances in which the redeemed will be in heaven, it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that they will increaſe, and make continual progreſs, in knowledge, holineſs, and happineſs, without end; and they will make advances in theſe, with

* Rev. xix. 1, 2, 3, 4.

with greater celerity, the longer they exiſt. The greateſt and chief objects of knowledge are infinite: This therefore, is a foundation for progreſs in knowledge, without end; and however ſwift the advances be, the ſubjects to which they attend, can never be exhauſted. However much they may know, at any ſuppoſed time, they will be ſo far from knowing all that may be known; that the advances in knowledge, which they have then made, will be little, compared with what may take place; and will put them under advantages, to make yet ſwifter advances in knowledge, for time to come. The mind is capable of enlarging its ideas and knowledge, by attention and exerciſe, when objects preſent, and invite to new diſcoveries; and ſo far as we can conceive, muſt enlarge and grow in ſtrength and capacity, in theſe circumſtances; and every degree of increaſe of knowledge, will prepare the mind, to make yet greater and more ſwift advances in knowledge, to which no bounds can be ſet, ſo as to put a ſtop to the progreſs. And in proportion to the increaſe of their knowledge, will their love and holineſs increaſe, and conſequently their enjoyment and happineſs.

The Deity, who is the infinite fountain and ſource of exiſtence, is almighty, infinitely wiſe and good, can open new ſcenes ſucceſſively, by which the bleſſed ſhall know more and more of him, and grow in degrees of holineſs and happineſs; and however faſt they increaſe, in progreſs and advances in knowledge, holineſs, and happineſs, they will forever be infinitely below the Deity, and fall infinitely ſhort of infinite exiſtence, holineſs, and felicity. This view may ſerve, in ſome meaſure, to give us an idea of the greatneſs of the felicity of the redeemed, and of the advancing grandeur and glory of the eternal kingdom of Chriſt, which far exceeds the utmoſt ſtretch of our thoughts and imagination.

And

And this is agreeable to the ſcripture, if it be not expreſsly or implicitly aſſerted there. The following words of the Redeemer, may be conſidered as expreſſing, or at leaſt implying this. "I am come, that they might have life, and that they might have it *more abundantly*."* Theſe words have been underſtood to expreſs the greater happineſs which the redeemed ſhall have by Chriſt, than that which they could have had by the firſt Adam, had he not ſinned. They may be underſtood to expreſs more, even the abounding, and endleſs increaſe of eternal life. They ſhall have it multiplied and abounding with increaſe forever. It is ſaid of the redeemed in heaven, "The Lamb, who is in the midſt of the throne, ſhall feed them, and *ſhall lead them unto living fountains of waters*."† Which may import not only the fulneſs of happineſs, and the care of Chriſt to ſupply them conſtantly; but the progreſs that ſhall be made, in new diſcoveries of divine truth and grace, and in enjoyment and happineſs. They ſhall be led from one fountain of living water to another, and new ones ſhall be conſtantly opening, for their greater refreſhment and pleaſure.

In heaven they will contemplate and ſearch out the works of God, and marvellous things without number, which to us, in this world, are unſearchable.‡ Theſe great and marvellous works of God, who is wonderful in counſel, and excellent in working, will be then explored and ſought out, with the greateſt attention and pleaſure.§ They will ſearch into, and ſee the divine plan, comprehending all things, and all events that have come to paſs, formed by infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, and executed by the all pervading energy of omnipotence, they will behold it with pleaſing admiration and wonder, as it has been opened in divine providence; and be more and more pleaſed with the depth of the wiſdom and knowledge of God. They will learn his manifold wiſdom, in planning and conducting all

* John x. 10. † Rev. vii. 17.
‡ Job iv. 9. § Pſal. cxi. 2. Iſai. xxviii. 29.

all things to the moſt happy iſſue, and underſtand, with pleaſing wonder and adoration, more of his judgments and ways, which in this ſtate, are unſearchable, and paſt finding out. They will ſee more and more of their own entire, abſolute, and univerſal dependence on God for all things, and of all creatures and things; that they are the clay, and he is the ſovereign Potter, and former of all things; and this will appear to them to be juſt as they would have it; and the greater ſenſe they have of this, the more pleaſure and happineſs will they have; while they rejoice, that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, and will reign forever.* For God will then be all in all; "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: To whom be glory forever. Amen."†

Secondly, THE wicked will go from the judgment unto everlaſting puniſhment. The ſcripture ſets this puniſhment in an awful and terrifying light; not only as it will be endleſs, but amazingly great and dreadful in degree. It is repreſented by their being caſt into a lake of fire and brimſtone, where they have no reſt, but ſhall be tormented night and day: That is, without any ceſſation, forever and ever: Where they ſhall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation; and the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up forever and ever.‡ If theſe are to be taken as in ſome meaſure metaphorical expreſſions; yet we muſt not think that they are deſigned to repreſent to our view and imagination, the ſufferings of the wicked, as greater and more dreadful, than they really will be; for this is not conſiſtent with the dignity and truth of God, to attempt to fright men, by threatening them with a greater evil than he ever will inflict on any; or by repreſenting them as ſuffering more than the wicked will ſuffer. Beſides, the wicked will be "veſſels fitted to deſtruction;"

* Rev. xix. 6. † Rom. xi. 36. 1 Cor. xv. 28.
‡ Rev. xiv. 10, 11. xx. 10, 15.

deſtruction ;" which implies that their whole capacity ſhall be devoted to ſuffering ; but they are capable of ſuffering as great evil as they can conceive or imagine. All the uſe which God will have for them, is to ſuffer ; this is all the end they can anſwer ; therefore, all their faculties, and their whole capacity will be employed, or uſed for this end ; otherwiſe they would be uſeleſs, and anſwer no end.

As the wicked are to ſuffer in the body, they will be capable of ſuffering by means of the body, or of ſuffering bodily pain, as well as that which is purely mental.— The body can, by omnipotence, be made capable of ſuffering the greateſt imaginable pain, without producing a diſſolution, or abating the leaſt degree of life and ſenſibility. The bodies of the wicked will be raiſed, and united to their ſouls, that they may be puniſhed, and ſuffer miſery in body and mind, in union. And God can render a future ſeparation impoſſible, and ſo form the body, as that it ſhall continue in full life, and with quick ſenſe, in union with the ſoul, in the hotteſt fire that can be imagined, or exiſt, through endleſs ages. And ſince the ſcripture ſpeaks of them as tormented in a lake of fire and brimſtone, perhaps we have no reaſon to conclude there will be nothing of this kind ; or that the ſuffering of this kind will not be ſo great, as to equal this repreſentation. The ſcripture ſays, "What if God, willing, (or determining) to ſhow his wrath, *and make his power known*, endureth with much long ſuffering the veſſels of wrath, fitted to deſtruction ?"* And that they "Shall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction, from the preſence of the Lord, and *from the glory of his power.*"† One way in which God will ſhow his power in the puniſhment of the wicked, will be in ſtrengthening, and upholding their bodies and ſouls, in ſuffering torments, which otherwiſe would be intolerable ; while at the ſame time,

* Rom. ix. 22. † 2 Theſſ. i. 9.

time, his power is gloriously manifested in the manner in which the punishment is to be inflicted.

The Apostle Peter, speaking of the day of judgment, and the destruction of the wicked, says, "The heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men." By the heavens are generally meant, in scripture, the sun, moon, and stars. These, with the earth, are reserved against the day of judgment, and for the destruction of ungodly men, by being all set on fire, with this earth. "When the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; and the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up."* If the heavens, the sun, moon, and fixed stars, with all the planets that accompany them, together with this earth, should be thrown together with a tremendous crash and noise, so as to make one common mass of liquid fire, and the wicked be cast into it, at the day of judgment, to remain there forever in this unquenchable fire; it would be agreeable to this description of it by Peter, and other passages of scripture. And perhaps this is the most natural construction of the words now cited. This would be a great and amazing display of omnipotence and represents the punishment of the wicked, by their bodies, as very dreadful; but not greater than they will deserve, or than God can inflict, and make them strong to bear.

But be this as it may, and in whatever way or degree the wicked will suffer pain by the body, it is not to be doubted, that their mental pain and sufferings will be the chief part of their punishment. Indeed, such a situation and torture of their bodies, as has been now mentioned, is suited to fill their minds with an amazing sense of the awful power, and dreadful anger of God, which must occasion inexpressible mental terror, anguish and torture.

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* 2 Peter iii. 7, 10.

A great part of the punishment of the wicked, will consist in a sense of the greatness, power and terrible majesty of JEHOVAH, and his wrath, and displeasure with them, manifested in their proper effects. This will fill their minds with excruciating pain, and horror inexpressible, while the tokens of all these are exhibited in the most dreadful manner to them, in their punishment.

But there are other circumstances and things, which will be dreadful ingredients in the cup of their punishment. Their own disposition and exercises of heart, their selfishness and pride, and enmity to God, which will rage to a dreadful degree, will be a source of constant misery. These will render the shame and contempt which they shall suffer, most keenly painful, and, in a sense, intolerable. They will never be in any degree reconciled to the divine decrees and government, and their dependence on God, and being absolutely in his hands; but all this will be most painful to them; they will be disposed to justify themselves, and find fault with the law of God, and his treatment of them. Their opposition to all this, will be so strong and constant, and their enmity will rage, so that a constant conviction in their judgment and conscience, that God deals justly with them, may not take place; and they will sometimes, if not continually, in the utmost rage, blaspheme the God of heaven. It will be, beyond our present conception, painful and tormenting to them, to know that they have not a friend in the universe, and never shall have one, who will show them the least kindness, or have any pity on them: That God is against them and will cast evil upon them, and not spare; and all the inhabitants of heaven highly approve of his treatment of them, and praise him for his righteous judgments, in punishing them as they see he does. The conviction they will have of the happiness of the redeemed, some of whom

they

they deſpiſed and hated, when in this world, will excite their envy and malice to a high degree; which are tormenting paſſions, in proportion to the ſtrength of their exerciſe.

Their company will add to their miſery. They will not find a friend among them; but all will be full of hatred, rage, and malice. The ſight and preſence of the devil and his angels, who have had a great hand in their ruin, and who will continue their ill will, and torment them in all the ways their cunning and malice can invent, will be very dreadful. And whatever intercourſe they may have with thoſe of mankind, who are ſuffering with them, it will give them no relief, but add to their miſery. And thoſe who have had the greateſt connexion with each other in this life, will be moſt unhappy together; who have injured each other, or been the means of their eternal ruin. And thoſe companions and ſuppoſed friends, who have tempted and ſeduced each other into the practice of vice, and way to ruin, will, by their mutual accuſations and curſes, be a vexation and torment to each other.

And all their attempts to get relief, which may be many and conſtant, will be in vain, and only add to their miſery. Every thought and idea which paſſes in their mind, will be a painful one. Reflections on what they paſſed through in this world, (and they muſt think and reflect) on the favours and comforts they had, and the advantages they were under to obtain ſalvation, and the happy opportunities which they abuſed; and the counſels, warnings, and admonitions which they had, &c. will but increaſe their miſery. And when they look forward, the aſſurance they will have, that nothing better is to come; but if there be any change, it will be againſt them; and they muſt be miſerable without end, and without hope; will fill their minds with the inſupportable

portable gloom, anguish and horror, of absolute despair; and sink eternally without any possible comfort or support.

This is a short sketch, and some of the outlines of the punishment and sufferings of the wicked. But Oh! How little can be told; how short are all our conceptions, and imaginations, of the truth and real greatness of this infinite evil! It will take an eternity to tell! And none but the Infinite Mind, does comprehend it.

It must be observed, however, that though the punishment of every one of these, will be endless, and great in degree beyond all present conception, and perhaps will increase without end; yet some will suffer a much greater degree of misery, than others; and there will be a great difference between them, in this respect, according to their different advantages and capacities, while in this world; to the light and conviction they had; according to the number of their sins, and the different degrees of criminality of them, &c. The omniscient, almighty, and just Judge, will be able and disposed to weigh and adjust the crimes and guilt of every one in exact and just balances, and proportion the degree of punishment, exactly to the criminality or ill desert of each one, by ordering every circumstance perfectly agreeable to it.—From Christ the judge, "Every one shall receive the things done in his body, *according to that he hath done*, whether it be good or bad."* Agreeable to this, Christ says, It shall be more tolerable, at the day of judgment, for Sodom and Gomorra, than for those who reject the gospel, preached by him, or his disciples. "And that servant who knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required."†

* 2 Cor. v. 10. † Luke xii. 47, 48.

IMPROVEMENT.

I. FROM the brief and imperfect view which has now been given of Death, a Separate State, Judgment, Heaven and Hell, we may reaſonably be led to reflect, upon the infinitely grand, important, and intereſting ſcenes that are before us, in which every one of the human race will have a part. A realizing view of theſe, will make all the things and concerns of time and ſenſe, which are temporal, and relate to this ſtate only, appear in their true littleneſs and vanity; and to be of no worth and importance, any farther than they relate to theſe future ſcenes, and may put us under advantage to be prepared for them. How reaſonable and important is it, that we ſhould, with the Apoſtles, and primitive chriſtians, conſtantly look, aim at, and purſue the things which are not ſeen, and are eternal!*

II. How infinitely dreadful is the end of the wicked! In what an unſpeakably dangerous ſtate, is he in this world? His feet ſtand on ſlippery places, expoſed to fall every moment into endleſs deſtruction, into which he will ſoon plunge, if he continue impenitent while in the body. "After his hard and impenitent heart, he is treaſuring up, unto himſelf, in this life, wrath, againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."†

How great is the deliverance, when any one ſinner is plucked as a brand from this eternal, infinitely dreadful fire! This gives joy in heaven. How happy is he who is the inſtrument of turning any from ſin, to righteouſneſs; of ſaving immortal ſouls from endleſs burnings! What can be more deſirable and pleaſing, to a benevolent

* 2 Cor. iv. 18. † Rom. ii. 5.

lent mind! He ſhall have an unſpeakable reward, and ſhine as the ſtars, forever and ever.

III. How great, how glorious and happy is the Redeemer in being able to ſave, and actually ſaving multitudes of ſinners, from ſuch infinite miſery, and raiſing them to ſuch high and endleſs happineſs and glory! How worthy is he to be truſted, loved and honoured. The inhabitants of heaven, will be eternally ſenſible of this, and ſay, "Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing; for thou waſt ſlain, and haſt redeemed us to God, by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and haſt made us unto our God, kings and prieſts."*

What infinite wickedneſs and folly is that of which they are guilty, who reject him, or caſt the leaſt ſlight upon him, and do not fly to him, without delay, as a refuge from the wrath to come; and for eternal happineſs! Bleſſed are all they who truſt in him. Surely he is infinitely precious, to all them who believe.

* Rev. v. 9, 10, 12.

CHAP. V.

On the Church of Chriſt.

SECTION I.

General Obſervations, concerning the Church of Chriſt.

THE word in the original, ἐκκλησία, generally tranſlated Church, is found above an hundred times in the New Teſtament; and ſignifies an aſſembly of men, called and collected together, for ſome ſpecial purpoſe. It is uſed in the ſcripture, except in a few inſtances, in an appropriated ſenſe, for believers in Chriſt, or the redeemed, as a collective body, or ſociety, united in, or under him as their head.

By the Church of Chriſt, is ſometimes meant the redeemed; all who have been, or ſhall be ſaved by Chriſt, who ſhall at laſt be collected into one general aſſembly, ſociety and kingdom. This is called the *inviſible* church, being at preſent hid, and out of our ſight, as thoſe in heaven are not ſeen by us, while in this life, and true believers, who are on earth, cannot be certainly diſtinguiſhed from others, who are not ſuch.

The church of Chriſt on earth, conſiſts of thoſe who are united together as profeſſed friends to Chriſt, and believers in him, and are under explicit engagements to ſerve him, and attend upon all his inſtitutions and ordinances, and to watch over, and aſſiſt each other; including both parents and their children. This is called the

viſible

viſible church of Chriſt, as it is a ſociety erected in the view of man, and conſiſts of members, who are viſibly, or in appearance, among the number of the ſaved, and real friends to Chriſt, though many of them, may not be really ſuch.

This church is conſidered as one common catholic ſociety, comprehending all viſible chriſtians in the world, compoſed of numerous particular ſocieties, or aſſemblies of chriſtians, in different places; and which, by a ſucceſſion of members, will continue the ſame ſociety or church, to the end of the world. This is meant by the church, when Chriſt ſays to Peter, "And I ſay unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt it."* And the word is uſed in this ſenſe, in many other places.—But every diſtinct ſociety of viſible believers, agreeing and united together to attend on the worſhip and ordinances of Chriſt, is called a church. As the church at Antioch; the church at Epheſus; the churches in Judea; the churches of Galatia; all the churches, &c.

Wherever a number of perſons voluntarily unite together, under the profeſſion of believers in Chriſt, and friends to him, to attend upon his inſtitutions and ordinances, according to his direction and commands, they are a viſible church of Chriſt, ſo long, and ſo far, as they appear to embrace and maintain the great and eſſential truths of chriſtianity; and to live in ſome good meaſure, agreeable to them.

Concerning the church of Chriſt in general, his viſible church in this world, and ſuch a particular church, the following things may be obſerved, in order to give a more clear idea of the ſubject, and to ſhow the reaſon and importance of it.

1. It is reaſonable and important, that the friends of the Redeemer, ſhould be his profeſſed friends; and that they

* Matth. xvi. 18.

they ſhould unite in a profeſſion of faith in him, and publicly eſpouſe his cauſe and intereſt in the world; and in aſſiſting each other, as his ſervants, and in attending upon his inſtitutions, and obeying his commands; hereby diſtinguiſhing themſelves from the reſt of mankind.—Accordingly, Chriſt has enjoined upon his friends and diſciples, to confeſs him before men, and to form themſelves into a public ſociety, or particular ſocieties, by which they ſhall be as a city, that is ſet on a hill, which cannot be hid; the light of the world, to ſhine before all men.*

2. The church of Chriſt, is a free, voluntary ſociety, in oppoſition to any force or compulſion uſed to oblige the members of it to join and come into it, contrary to their conſent and free choice. All are invited to be members of it, and none are to be rejected, who appear to be willing to come and to conform to the rules which Chriſt has given; and none who have been received, are to be rejected and caſt out, who chooſe to continue members, unleſs they behave diſorderly, and refuſe to obey the laws of Chriſt.

3. Jeſus Chriſt is the ſole legiſlator and ruler in his church. No particular church, or the church in general, has any authority or right to make any laws or rules in order to govern or regulate the church, or individual members of it; but are commanded to attend to thoſe which Chriſt has given, and obey and execute them only.

The church is not a worldly ſociety; and is not to be ruled or regulated by civil laws, or rulers of political, worldly ſocieties; ſuch rulers have no more authority in the church, than any other member of it. The viſible church is called in ſcripture, "The kingdom of heaven; the kingdom of God, and of Chriſt," who ſaid, "My kingdom is not of this world." It is a diſtinct, and entirely different ſociety and kingdom, from civil, worldly ſocieties

* Matth. x. 32. v. 14, 15, 16.

ſocieties or kingdoms, and cannot be connected with them, ſo as to be in any reſpect or degree, dependent on them, or have any alliance with them. The church wants no ſupport from civil authority, and ought not to be governed or controled, in any reſpect, by the civil magiſtrate. When he attempts this, and to make laws to govern or regulate the church of Chriſt, he invades the rights of Chriſt, and uſurps the authority which belongs only to the head of the church, who is the ſole ruler in it.

The church, when it is regulated by the laws of Chriſt, and obedient to him, is friendly to human, civil ſociety; and Chriſt commands his ſubjects, the members of his church, to obey magiſtrates, and ſeek to promote the peace and greateſt good of ſuch ſocieties! And all they expect or deſire from the civil magiſtrate, is to be protected in the enjoyment of their civil rights, and their religion, ſo long as they are not injurious to their neighbours, and live quiet and peaceable lives.

4. Every member of the church, has a right to judge for himſelf, what are the laws of Chriſt, and what is his duty, being accountable to none but Chriſt, for his judgment and conduct; and none have a right, or authority, to dictate to him, or control him, in theſe matters. In matters wherein the church, as a body, are to decide, and act, they muſt be determined by the voice of the major part, or the greateſt number of the members, as is done in other ſocieties; this being conſidered as the voice and determination of the church. And if they be not unanimous in any thing, to be determined by the church, they who diſſent from the judgment of the majority, muſt ſubmit, and conform to them; unleſs the judgment and conduct of the church, appear to them, ſo inconſiſtent with the truth, and the laws of Chriſt, that it is his command, and their duty, to refuſe to conform, and to leave

and renounce the church. In this caſe, no one has any right to control them.

5. The viſible church, the kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of God, was ſmall in the beginning of it; but is to increaſe, and grow, till it ſhall be great, and fill the world, and all nations ſhall come into it, and be members of it; and ſhall continue forever, the only, moſt happy and glorious ſociety and kingdom. God has had a church in the world, ever ſince the apoſtacy of man.—Before the flood, there were the ſons of God, diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of mankind, who called on the name of the Lord. It continued in the family of Noah, and ſome of his deſcendents, till the days of Abrahatn, when it was more particularly formed in his family; and farther eſtabliſhed and regulated among thoſe who deſcended from him, the people of Iſrael. When the chriſtian diſpenſation took place, the church put on a new form, in many reſpects, though it was the ſame church, as to the eſſentials of it, and was ſtill the church of God, the church of Chriſt.

The *chriſtian church*, conſiſting of the profeſſed followers of Chriſt, was ſmall in the beginning of it; but Chriſt foretold that it ſhould grow, and become great, and promiſed, that it ſhould continue and live on earth, to the end of the world. He ſaid, the gates of hell, (*Hades*, death) ſhould not prevail againſt it: That is, that it ſhould not die, or ceaſe to be a viſible church on earth. He repreſented the growth of it, till it ſhould cover the earth, and fill the world, by the following ſimilitudes. "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of muſtard ſeed, which a man took and ſowed in his field: Which indeed is the leaſt of all ſeeds; but when it is grown, it is the greateſt among herbs, and becometh a tree; ſo that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. Another parable ſpake he unto them.

The

The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three meaſures of meal, till the whole was leavened."*

6. The viſible church of Chriſt, is and will be, in an imperfect ſtate, and in a greater or leſs degree, impure and corrupt, while in this world. All the members of it are in a great degree imperfect, corrupt and ſinful; and many, who are totally corrupt and enemies to Chriſt, are profeſſed and viſible friends to him, and, as ſuch, are admitted into his church. Chriſt has not made any proviſion, by which unworthy perſons, who are not his friends at heart, can be excluded from his church in this world, ſo long as there are ſuch, who put on the outward appearance, and profeſſion of friendſhip and ſubmiſſion to him, and offer themſelves to join this ſociety. He has not conſtituted any infallible judges, to determine who ſhall be admitted into his viſible church, who are able to detect every hypocrite, and reject all who are unworthy members. When the utmoſt care is taken, and the rules of Chriſt, with reſpect to this, are faithfully regarded and practiſed, ſtill the heart cannot be certainly known; and chriſtians muſt act according to the viſibility, or outward appearance, and profeſſion of friendſhip to Chriſt, which hypocrites may put on, and ſo be admitted into the church, who have no right to a place there, in the ſight of God. And the members of particular churches may be, and often are, ſo injudicious and careleſs, as to admit members, which are viſibly unqualified, and ought not to be admitted; by which the church becomes more and more corrupt, and proper diſcipline is not kept up; and thoſe who ought to be caſt out, are tolerated: And by degrees, through the influence of erroneous teachers, great errors may be imbibed and maintained, and corrupt and evil practices take place; and many cuſtoms and rites be introduced, which Chriſt has not commanded; but

* Matth. xiii. 31, 32, 33.

but are the inventions and commandments of men of corrupt minds, by which the purity and beauty of the church is greatly tarniſhed.

Particular churches, and the viſible church of Chriſt in general, may become in a great degree corrupt, in ſome or all thoſe things; and yet be, and continue the viſible church of Chriſt. And it is difficult to determine, how far a particular church, or the church in general, may be corrupted and deviate from the laws of Chriſt, and yet be viſibly a church of Chriſt, ſo as to have a right to be conſidered and acknowledged to be a true church, though corrupt and wrong in many things. In this caſe, particular chriſtians muſt judge for themſelves; and particular churches muſt judge of other churches; and great caution and prudence ought to be uſed: Every one ought to judge and act right, and according to the rules which Chriſt has given, in this caſe, and all are accountable to him for their opinion and conduct.

A church may doubtleſs become ſo corrupt, and go off ſo far, from the faith and practice of true chriſtians, and ſink ſo far into groſs errors, and open conduct, contrary to the goſpel, and the expreſs commands of Jeſus Chriſt, as that it ought to be rejected, as not a viſible church of Chriſt; and his commands to his faithful followers, may be, "Come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you."* The church of Rome, or the papal church, has doubtleſs been viſibly, not a true church of Chriſt for many years: It has been ſo, perhaps, ever ſince the time of the reformation from popery. Though it was really a corrupt, falſe church before; yet it was not viſibly ſo, till the marks of a falſe church were clearly diſcerned, and it was known to the reformed viſible church of Chriſt, to be the beaſt, and the great harlot, deſcribed in the Revelation. Then the voice of Chriſt was

* 2 Cor. vi. 17.

was heard, ſpeaking to them, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her ſins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." And then ſhe was viſibly, and publicly excommunicated by Chriſt and his viſible church; and conſequently, was no longer a viſible church of Chriſt; but the contrary.

The reformed church, or the different churches which have taken place in the proteſtant world, upon the reformation from popery, and ſince, are far from being wholly purified from a great mixture of error, and from practices which are not according to revealed truth; and which would ceaſe, were they to be conformed to the pattern deſcribed in the word of God: Some are nearer the rule, and others farther from it; and many are doubtleſs greatly degenerated from what they once were. And it is probable, that the ſpirit, maxims, and practices of Antichriſt, or that are really antichriſtian, do take place, in a greater or leſs degree, in all theſe churches, at this day; and that they will, the moſt of them at leaſt, grow more and more corrupt, in doctrine and practice, till they become like the incurable leprous houſe in Iſrael, which was ordered to be wholly demoliſhed, that another might be built in the room of it. So, when the millennium comes on, theſe corrupt churches, which will be too far ſunk in error and ſinful practices, to be patched up and healed, will be removed and vaniſh away, ſharing with Antichriſt in ruin, and giving way to a church which ſhall be built upon the goſpel plan. Then the bride, the Lamb's wife, will put on her beautiful garments, and ariſe and ſhine in the light that ſhall then come, and the glory of the Lord which ſhall riſe upon her.* But even then, the viſible church will not be perfect in the beauty of holineſs; though the uncircumciſed and unclean, may no more enter into it;† yet not one of

* See the Diſſertation on the Millennium, ſubjoined to this Syſtem.

† Iſaiah lii. 1.

of the members will be perfectly holy. The moſt perfect beauty and glory of the church, will not take place till after the reſurrection.

Thoſe of different denominations and churches, in the chriſtian world, who believe and expect, there will be a more perfect ſtate of the church in the millennium, are diſpoſed to think, that the denomination and particular church to which they belong, will be the pattern; and that all chriſtians, will, in that day, conform to that, and that thoſe things in which others differ from them, both with reſpect to doctrine and practice, will then be relinquiſhed and ceaſe. But moſt of them, if not all, will be greatly diſappointed in their views and expectations with reſpect to this. A church will then ariſe, which will have all that is good, right and excellent, in the different denominations and churches, that exiſt now, or have been; and will renounce all the ſuperſtitions and corruptions, in principle or practice, which have taken place. Bleſſed are all they, who are real members of the invisible church of Chriſt.

SECTION II.

Concerning the Officers of a Church.

EVERY diſtinct and particular church, in order to be complete, and properly organized, muſt have officers, or perſons diſtinguiſhed from the members in general, by being choſen and appointed to particular ſervice and duties, who are to ſuperintend the affairs of the church, to preſide and act a particular part, in teaching and exhortation, and adminiſtering the ordinances

which

which Chriſt has appointed; and taking particular care of the temporals of the church.

Of theſe, paſtors, elders, preſbyters or biſhops, are the firſt and moſt important. By theſe names, not different orders, higher and lower, or different offices, are meant; but one and the ſame perſon, in one and the ſame office, is called by all theſe names; and therefore they denote the ſame office. This has been abundantly proved, by many who have attended to the ſubject; therefore, it is needleſs particularly to attend to it here.

The Apoſtles were a diſtinct and ſuperior order of men, and appointed by Chriſt immediately, as extraordinary officers, to conſtitute the firſt churches, and to give infallible rules and laws to them, by which they were to be regulated and governed: In which extraordinary office they had no ſucceſſors. The Apoſtles were elders, or preſbyters or biſhops, and more; they were appointed immediately by Chriſt, as infallible judges and dictators to the churches. They ordained preſbyters or biſhops, as being ſuch themſelves, in their ordinary capacity; but their extraordinary commiſſion was not, nor could be, tranſmitted to others; but died with them: And there have been no Apoſtles in the church ſince their death; nor will there be any ſuch officers again in the church, to the end of the world.

The Apoſtles ordained elders or biſhops in the churches, which they conſtituted, who were firſt choſen by the members of theſe churches, or they did it with their conſent. "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and prayed with faſting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed."* The word in the original, here tranſlated, *when they had ordained*, χειροτονησαντες, ſignifies to point out perſons, by lifting up of hands, or voting, and the ſenſe has been given in the following words: "When they had, with the

* Acts xiv. 23.

the concurrent ſuffrage of the people, conſtituted preſbyters for them in every church;"* or, "They ordained them elders, by the votes of the people."† The Old Engliſh bible, tranſlates it, "When they had ordained them elders by election."‡ This is eſſential to a free ſociety of any kind, that the members of it ſhould chooſe their own officers. There muſt be one or more elders in every church, in order to furniſh it to all the duties and tranſactions of a church, and to have it complete. From the above quoted paſſage it appears, that one elder was ordained in every church, if not more. It appears alſo, from the addreſſes which Chriſt ſent to the ſeven churches in Aſia, by his ſervant John, that there was but one elder in each of theſe churches, who is called, *the angel of the church.*

The buſineſs of this office, is to preſide in all the tranſactions of the church; to adminiſter the ordinances of Chriſt; to preach the goſpel, and lead in the public worſhip of the church: "Giving themſelves conſtantly to prayer, and to the miniſtry of the word."§ To teach, exhort, warn, reprove and rebuke, publicly, and more privately. The qualifications and character of theſe elders or biſhops, are particularly given and ſtated by the Apoſtle Paul, in his letters to Timothy and Titus. Theſe paſtors or biſhops, being choſen by the church, are conſtituted officers, by being publicly ordained to that office, by ſome other elders or elder, by laying on of hands.¶ Thus Timothy and Titus, were directed by the Apoſtle Paul, to ordain elders.‖

It has been ſuppoſed by ſome, that the right and power to ordain their paſtors or biſhops, is in the churches; at leaſt, that it is not wholly lodged in the hands of the elders,

* Doddridge on the place. † Mr. Harrington.
‡ See Doddridge's note on this verſe. § Acts vi. 4.
¶ 1 Tim. iv. 14. v. 22. 2 Tim. i. 6.
‖ 1 Tim. v. 22. 2 Tim. ii. 2. Tit. i. 5.

elders, and confined to them: And there have been ſome inſtances, of the ordination of miniſters by the brethren of the church, without the aſſiſtance, or even the preſence, of any other elder or paſtor of a church. But there does not appear to be any example of this, or warrant for it, in the ſcripture. It is ſaid, if the church have no authority or right, to conſtitute and ordain their own officers, then there muſt be an uninterrupted ſucceſſion of miniſters, from the Apoſtles, to the end of the world; and if this chain of ſucceſſion be once broken or interrupted, it cannot be renewed again; but the ſucceſſion muſt neceſſarily ceaſe, and there can be no more miniſters and officers in the church, to the end of the world. To this it may be anſwered, that if this be an appointment of Jeſus Chriſt, a conſtitution which he has made, that his church ſhall be furniſhed with miniſters, by ſuch a ſucceſſion from one to another; then he will take care, that it ſhall never be interrupted, but ſhall be continued, ſo long as there is a church on earth.

But to this it has been ſaid, that we have no evidence, that ſuch ſucceſſion has not in fact been interrupted many times; and not one miniſter or elder at this day can prove, or have any evidence himſelf, that he has been ordained, by one or more, who have received this right and power, to ordain by an uninterrupted ſucceſſion from the Apoſtles; which he ought to have, in order to be ſatisfied, that he has a right to act in this office; and to be able to prove it to others, in order to their receiving and treating him as an elder. Beſides, if this ſucceſſion could be proved, it muſt be brought down through the hands of the pope, and the falſe antichriſtian church, which is not the church of Chriſt; and neceſſarily interrupts the ſucceſſion of the miniſters of Chriſt.

Upon this the following things are to be obſerved.

1. If there be evidence from the ſcriptures, that ſuch an order and ſucceſſion of men, as officers in the church,

has

has been inſtituted by Chriſt; and is implied in the commiſſion which he gave to his diſciples; "Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt: Teaching them to obſerve all things, whatſoever I have commanded you: *And lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*"* This is ſufficient, poſitive proof, that ſuch a ſucceſſion of miniſters, does in fact take place, in the viſible church of Chriſt; and that this commiſſion has been tranſmitted down from one to another, from that time to this day; and this ſucceſſion has not been interrupted, and will not be, to the end of the world. This therefore, may ſafely, and with all deſirable certainty, be taken for granted, without any farther poſitive proof, by every miniſter of the goſpel; unleſs there be ſtrong, poſitive evidence, that ſuch ſucceſſion has been interrupted, with reſpect to him; and that he has been irregularly introduced to that office, by him or them, who have not had their commiſſion and authority to ordain, handed down by ſucceſſion, from the Apoſtles to them.

Therefore, ſince the above recited commiſſion implies, that there ſhould be a ſucceſſion of officers in the church to the end of the world, to proſelyte, baptize, and teach men, to obſerve the inſtitutions and commands of Chriſt, to whom he has promiſed his preſence and aſſiſtance: And ſince the Apoſtles appear to underſtand their commiſſion in this light, and to practice upon it accordingly, by ordaining elders in every church which they formed: And elders or preſbyters, ordained others by laying on their hands; and they who were ſo ordained, were directed to commit the goſpel, that is, the preaching and diſpenſation of it, "to faithful men, who ſhould be able to teach others alſo;" and to lay hands upon them, not ſuddenly, but after proper examination and acquaintance;† which can be nothing leſs or more, than ordaining

* Matth. xxviii. 19, 20. † 1 Tim. v. 22. 2 Tim. ii. 2.

daining them to the work of the miniſtry: And Titus is directed to ordain elders in every city in the iſland of Crete:* Since all this is evident, and certainly ſo; and there can nothing be found in the ſcripture to contradict ſuch a ſucceſſion appointed by Chriſt, or in the leaſt, inconſiſtent with it; it may and ought to be conſidered as poſitive evidence that there is, in fact, ſuch an uninterrupted ſucceſſion, ſufficient to ſatisfy the judgment and conſcience of an honeſt man, who is ordained to the work of the evangelical miniſtry, that he has derived his ordination and commiſſion from Chriſt, by an uninterrupted ſucceſſion; unleſs there be poſitive proof to the contrary, with reſpect to his ordination.

2. Though the ſucceſſion of ordinations, in order to its being uninterrupted, muſt come through the hands of the pope, and the miniſters of the church of Rome, (which is not certain, as it has been ſhown, how it might be tranſmitted down by others, who were not members of that church) yet this affords no poſitive proof, that a proper, uninterrupted ſucceſſion has not taken place. A viſible church may be very corrupt, and yet be a viſible church of Chriſt, and the public adminiſtrations and acts of the officers of it, authentic and valid. And who can prove, that the pope, and his adherents, were viſibly antichriſt, and that the church of Rome, was viſibly, not the church of Chriſt, but a falſe church, and was really and properly renounced and excommunicated, by the true church of Chriſt, before the time of the reformation from popery? During the preceding dark times, there was not light enough, even among real chriſtians in general, to render that church viſibly, not the church of Chriſt; and ſo long as this was the caſe, the officers, the miniſters in that church, were viſible miniſters of Chriſt, and their viſible acts, their ordinations, &c. were valid,

* Titus i. 5.

notwithſtanding

notwithſtanding they were very corrupt and wicked.* When the reformation came on, light aroſe and increaſed, and the great corruptions and wickedneſs of the church of Rome, and of particular churches, included in it; and the irregularity and wickedneſs of the officers of it, and of their adminiſtrations, were clearly ſeen and expoſed; and they were admoniſhed, and great pains were taken to convince and reform the pope and his clergy, and all orders and degrees of men in that church. But they who ſtill adhered to that church, were deaf and obſtinate, and refuſed to repent and reform. Upon which, thoſe who were convinced of the errors and wickedneſs of that church, came out, and ſeparated from it, and formed other churches, more agreeable to the word of God; among whom there were miniſters, or numbers of the clergy, who had been ordained in the church of Rome, while that was viſibly a church of Chriſt. They, by the conſent of the reformed churches, took the overſight of them, and adminiſtered ordinances, and ordained others to be elders in the churches; and in this way, an uninterrupted ſucceſſion of ordinations, and miniſters in the proteſtant churches in general, has taken place; and may continue down to the end of the world; and certainly will, if this be the will and appointment of Chriſt; though

* A miniſter in the pureſt church, may be a very wicked man, and practiſe abominable vices: But ſo long as this is not viſible and known, he is a viſible miniſter of Chriſt, and his public adminiſtrations are as authentic and valid, as thoſe of any other miniſter, until he is detected, and his wickedneſs becomes viſible, and he is depoſed from his office in the church, by thoſe who have a right to do it, according to the laws of Chriſt. So the church of Rome was viſibly a church of Chriſt, till there was light to diſcover, or eyes to ſee the corruptions and wickedneſs of it, and the veil and covering was taken off, ſo that the marks of the beaſt, and the great harlot, deſcribed in the ſcripture, were publicly ſeen to be upon it; and events took place, by which it was viſibly rejected by Chriſt, for the great apoſtacy, of which the members of it, had been guilty, and who continued viſibly impenitent.

though the church of Rome ſhould be conſidered *now*, not the viſible church of Chriſt, and properly excommunicated, agreeable to the laws of Chriſt; and though there may have been ſome inſtances of irregular ordinations, and which have not taken place in this ſucceſſion, in ſome proteſtant churches.

3. There is ſatisfactory and abundant evidence from hiſtory, and otherwiſe, that it has been the general, if not the univerſal cuſtom of the churches, to ordain miniſters by the laying on of the hands of others, who were before ſo ordained; and that great care has been taken to keep up a ſucceſſion in this way. And even thoſe churches who have believed, they had the power of ordination of their miniſters, within themſelves, have generally thought it moſt regular and proper, to have them ordained by other ordained miniſters, when and where this was practicable. And there have been very few inſtances of ordinations performed without the aſſiſtance of one or more, who had been before ordained in this way; and if there have been any ſuch, they have had no influence to interrupt a general and almoſt univerſal ſucceſſion of ordinations by the hands of preſbyters, from the Apoſtles down to this time.

When all this is well conſidered, will it not be evident, that every miniſter of the goſpel, who has been ordained by the hands of preſbyters, or biſhops, or at leaſt of one, by whatever name they or he may be called, has good warrant to conſider himſelf and act as a viſible miniſter of Chriſt, who has received his commiſſion and authority for this, from Chriſt, by an uninterrupted ſucceſſion, unleſs there be good, poſitive evidence, that this cannot be true, with reſpect to himſelf; he being a known exception from what has generally, and almoſt univerſally taken place?

It has been objected to the doctrine of an uninterrupted ſucceſſion, as neceſſary to continue this order of

officers in the church, that this will, in many inſtances, put it beyond the power of chriſtians to obtain miniſters or paſtors, ſo as to be a regular church, and have the ordinances of baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper, adminiſtered to them. A number of chriſtians may be caſt away on a deſolate iſland, and be obliged to live there, where they cannot obtain a paſtor, unleſs they can ordain him themſelves, and give him authority to perform all the buſineſs of this office. And a number of true chriſtians may live in a country, and at a time, where no miniſters can be found, who will ordain any one to be their miniſter, whom they ſhall chooſe, or think to be fit for that office. Muſt thoſe be deprived of miniſters and the ordinances of the goſpel?

A reply to ſuch an objection, has been already ſuggeſted. It is really begging the queſtion: For if Chriſt has made ſuch a conſtitution, and ordained that thoſe officers in his church, ſhall be continued by an uninterrupted ſucceſſion, he will not only ſee that it does take place, and that it ſhall not be interrupted; but will always put it in the power of his people to be ſupplied with miniſters in this way; and there never has been an inſtance to contradict this, and never will be. The ſuppoſition therefore which is made in the objection, is a groundleſs one, and impoſſible. Chriſt will not ſuffer ſuch an inſtance to take place, unleſs it be for his glory, the good of his church in general, and beſt for the individual chriſtians, who are deprived in this way, of goſpel miniſters and ordinances. And if there be any ſuch inſtances, they can be no objection to this inſtitution of Chriſt.

Theſe miniſters and officers in the church, are to be devoted to the buſineſs of their ſtation and office, and to give themſelves to this work, which they have undertaken, in preaching the goſpel, and adminiſtering the ordinances of Chriſt; in taking care of the church, and preſiding

ſiding in all the public tranſactions of it, acting with the concurrence and conſent of the church. For they have no authority to dictate to the church, and control it in any matter, contrary to their judgment and conſent.—They are indeed ſaid to *have the rule over* the churches;* but this means only to take the lead or preſide in the churches, in their public devotions and tranſactions, as the word in the original ſignifies. The churches, and every particular member of them, are obliged to ſubmit to them, and obey them, ſo far as they preach the doctrines of the goſpel, and urge the commands of Chriſt; for ſo far as they do this, they have all the authority of Chriſt; and diſobedience to them, when they declare the will of Chriſt, and urge obedience to his laws, is diſobedience to Chriſt, and rejecting him. But of this the members of the church are to judge for themſelves, whether, what they preach and dictate, be agreeable to the revealed will of Chriſt, and if they judge it to be contrary to revealed truth, they will conſider the miniſter as having no authority, and themſelves under no obligation to regard him in thoſe things; and he has no authority to compel them to obedience to his dictates, or to inflict any puniſhment upon them, or ſubject them to any worldly inconvenience, on this account. They are indeed, accountable to Chriſt for their judgment and conduct in ſuch caſes, and to him alone, as he has commanded them to judge and act right, and will condemn every thing that is not ſo; and is the final judge, to whom all appeals are to be made.† Thus the elders of

* Heb. xiii. 7, 17, 24.

† This is ſaid with reference to the whole, or the majority of a church. If particular members, or the minor part of a church, reject the doctrines and refuſe to practiſe the duties which the paſtor inculcates, as preſcribed by Chriſt, and the majority of the church approve of them; the former are ſo far accountable to the church, as to be the proper ſubjects of diſcipline, and may be rejected by the church, as thoſe who, in their judgment, refuſe to obey the truth, and walk diſorderly.

the churches, are not to be lords over them; but to lead them, and be examples to them, while they preſide as overſeers, or biſhops, feeding them, by preaching the truths of the goſpel to them, and declaring the whole counſel of God.*

There are other officers in the church, called deacons, who have the care of the temporal, worldly concerns of the church. The church, when regulated according to the laws of Chriſt, makes proviſion for the ſupport of public religion; for a decent and convenient place in which they may attend public worſhip; the ſupport of the miniſters of the goſpel; and furniſhing the table of the Lord. They are alſo to provide for the relief and comfort of the poor members of the church. The care and overſight of this proviſion, is committed to the deacons. And they are more eſpecially to diſtribute to the poor out of the common ſtock of the church, and take care that no one may ſuffer for want of the neceſſaries and comforts of life. We have a particular account of the inſtitution of thoſe officers in the church, in the beginning of the ſixth chapter of the Acts. The church pointed out, and choſe, thoſe whom they thought beſt qualified for this office, and preſented them to the Apoſtles, who ordained them to this office, by laying their hands on them, and praying.

It does not appear from the ſcripture, that there are more diſtinct orders of men, and officers, appointed in the church, than theſe two, viz. elders or biſhops, and deacons. Both of theſe are repeatedly mentioned together, as being the only officers in the church, as nothing is ſaid of any other. The Apoſtle Paul, when he is directing Timothy, in his regulating the churches in which he had a particular concern, and ordaining officers, mentions only elders or biſhops, and deacons, and particularly

* 1 Pet. v. 2, 3. Acts xx. 28.

ticularly deſcribes the qualifications of theſe. And he directs his letter to the church at Philippi, in the following words, "To all the ſaints which are in Chriſt Jeſus, at Philippi, with the *biſhops and deacons.*" Had there been any other order of officers in that church, it may be preſumed, he would have mentioned them, when he directs ſo particularly to theſe. This ſame Apoſtle ſays, that when Chriſt aſcended to heaven, "He gave ſome apoſtles; and ſome prophets; and ſome evangeliſts; and ſome paſtors, and teachers."* Some have ſuppoſed, there are more than two orders of miniſters, mentioned here; but there does not appear to be any evidence of this. By Apoſtles and Prophets, are intended the extraordinary gifts and officers in the primitive church, who were not to continue; but ceaſed, when thoſe miraculous gifts, with which they were endowed, ceaſed; the church having no farther need of them.—And if Evangeliſts, were not alſo extraordinary officers; and accordingly ceaſed with the others mentioned before; they were ordinary miniſters of the goſpel, ordained to travel, and preach at large, not being confined to a particular church, city, or country. Paſtors and teachers, were the ſame office, which every elder in particular churches ſuſtained. So that by evangeliſts, paſtors, and teachers, but one ſort and degree of officers is meant, viz. miniſters of the goſpel.

* Eph. iv. 11.

SECTION III.

On the Public Inſtitutions, Ordinances and Worſhip of the Church.

SOCIAL and public worſhip, conſiſting in prayer, ſinging pſalms or hymns, and in preaching and hearing the goſpel, appears to be an inſtitution of Chriſt, from what is recorded in ſcripture. The diſciples of Chriſt, after his aſcenſion, met together, and continued with one accord in prayer and ſupplication; being about an hundred and twenty.* And when converts were multiplied, and a church was formed at Jeruſalem, "they continued ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles doctrine and fellowſhip, and in breaking of bread and prayers. And continued daily with one accord in the temple, praiſing God."† At Antioch, Barnabas and Saul aſſembled themſelves with the church a whole year, and taught much people.‡ It appears, that the church at Corinth, often came together into one place, to attend on the preaching of the goſpel, prayer, ſinging pſalms, and the adminiſtration of the Lord's ſupper.§ Chriſtians had places convenient for them to convene in public aſſemblies, and attend on public worſhip.‖ And they were commanded, "Not to forſake the aſſembling themſelves together," for public exhortation, and mutual edification, &c.¶

Public worſhip being an inſtitution of Chriſt, this neceſſarily implies, a place where this may be attended decently, and with the greateſt convenience to the members

* Acts i. 14, 15. † Acts ii. 42, 46, 47. ‡ Acts xi. 26.
§ 1 Cor. xi. 18. &c. and Chap. xiv. throughout.
‖ Jam. ii. 1—10. ¶ Heb. x. 24, 25.

bers of the church; which is to be agreed upon and provided by the church, uſing all ſuch help and aſſiſtance, as the head of the church ſhall, in his providence afford them. They are to aſſemble on the firſt day of the week, for public worſhip; and at any other time, which the church ſhall judge is agreeable to the will of Chriſt, as beſt ſuited to promote his cauſe, and their edification. And there may be ſpecial calls in divine providence, to public faſting and prayer, or thankſgiving. And particular circumſtances may render it proper and important to meet oftener, and to ſpend more time in public worſhip, at ſome times, than at others.

It has been obſerved, that the biſhops, or overſeers of the church, are to preach the word, and to preſide and lead in public prayers, to which they are to devote themſelves: And they are, on this account, to be counted worthy of double honour, and be decently ſupported with the neceſſaries and comforts of life. For Chriſt has ordained, that they who preach the goſpel, ſhould live of the goſpel.*

The ſtated time for public worſhip, is the firſt day of the week, which the Apoſtles, under the inſpiration and particular direction from Chriſt, fixed upon, and appointed, to be the chriſtian ſabbath. The Jewiſh ſeventh day ſabbath, which was a a type and ſhadow of that redemption which was, in a peculiar ſenſe and degree, effected by the ſufferings and death of Chriſt, from which he roſe on the firſt day of the week; and of the reſt, into which the chriſtian church entered, upon this ceaſed and was aboliſhed; when the ſubſtance, and the things typified by it took place. With reference to this, the Apoſtle Paul ſays to chriſtians; "Let no man therefore, judge you, in meat or in drink, or in reſpect of an holy day, or of the new moon, *or of the ſabbath days.* Which are a ſhadow of things to come; but the body is of Chriſt."†

The

* 1 Cor. ix. 14. Gal. vi. 6. 1 Tim. v. 17, 18. † Col. ii. 16, 17.

The Apoſtle has reſpect to the Jewiſh rites, reſpecting meat and drink; and to their feaſt days, new moons, and their weekly ſabbaths, and declares, that chriſtians, eſpecially thoſe who were Gentiles, were not under any obligation to obſerve them. This has no reſpect to the chriſtian ſabbath. This was obſerved by the Apoſtles and chriſtian churches in their day. Chriſt having riſen on the firſt day of the week, he appeared repeatedly to his diſciples, while they were together on this firſt day. And on this firſt day of the week, "when the day of Pentecoſt was fully come, and they were all with one accord in one place," the holy ſpirit was poured out on them, and they ſpake with tongues, as the ſpirit gave them utterance: And Peter preached to the multitude, who were collected on that occaſion, and great numbers were converted.* The day of Pentecoſt, was always on the firſt day of the week.† And this day of the week was honoured by this remarkable event, and not the ſeventh day of the week, which was the Jewiſh ſabbath. And no reaſon can be given, why the church were together in one place on that day, but that it was the day of the week on which they were directed, and uſed to aſſemble for inſtruction and worſhip.

Accordingly, we find, that on the firſt day of the week, chriſtian churches uſed to aſſemble for public worſhip, with the Apoſtles approbation. When the Apoſtle Paul, and his companions in travelling came to Troas, they continued there ſeven days, without meeting for public worſhip. "And upon the firſt day of the week, when the diſciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them."‡ By this it appears, that the firſt day of the week was the day on which chriſtians uſed to meet for public worſhip. If the ſeventh day of the week had been their ſabbath, why did they not meet on that day to hear Paul preach, and to break bread, that is, to partake

* Acts ii. 1. &c. † Levit. xxiii. 15—21. ‡ Acts xx. 7.

take of the Lord's ſupper? That chriſtian churches were wont to meet on the firſt day of the week for religious purpoſes, is evident from the following direction which this Apoſtle gives to the church at Corinth. "Now, concerning the collection for the ſaints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even ſo do ye, upon the firſt day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in ſtore, as God hath proſpered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."* It appears from this, that chriſtian churches in general, or rather univerſally, aſſembled together on every firſt day of the week; the reaſon of which cannot be given, unleſs this were their ſabbath, on which day they attended public worſhip: And this was a proper time to make a collection for the poor ſaints, which is to be conſidered as an act of public worſhip. Nor can it be ſuppoſed, that the churches would all agree in fixing on this day, to meet together for public worſhip, unleſs it were by the direction of the Apoſtles, which they gave to all the churches, as from Chriſt, who had inſtructed them in this matter, before his aſcenſion, or had ſince communicated it to them, by inſpiration. In this view, there appears a conſiſtency, in all the facts and aſſertions concerning this, which have been mentioned.

And the words of the Apoſtle John, are a confirmation of all this, when he ſays, "I was in the ſpirit *on the Lord's day.*"† By the Lord's day, he muſt mean ſome particular day of the week, which was known by this name to the churches of Chriſt, as diſtinguiſhed from all other days; for otherwiſe, it would not be ſaying any thing, which would be intelligible to chriſtians, or of any ſignification. It ſuppoſes there was one day in the week, conſecrated to the honour and ſervice of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and that this was therefore called, *the Lord's day*: as that repaſt of bread and wine, which was inſtituted by Chriſt,

* 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. † Rev. i. 10.

Chriſt, and obſerved in the churches, *in remembrance of him*, was called, *the Lord's ſupper*, to diſtinguiſh it from all other eating and drinking together, as peculiarly conſecrated to his uſe and honour. And that this day, which for this reaſon, the Apoſtle John calls, the Lord's day, is the firſt day of the week, is evident, beyond a doubt, in that this day, and no other day of the week, has been diſtinguiſhed and known by this name, in the church of Chriſt, from that day to this, of which there is inconteſtible evidence.

And that the firſt day of the week is appointed by Chriſt to be the chriſtian ſabbath, to be obſerved by his church as holy time, and diſtinguiſhed from other days, by being devoted by them, in a peculiar manner, to his ſervice and honour, will be further evident perhaps, and ſome objections removed, by the following obſervations.

1. It is evident from divine revelation, that it is the will of God, that one day in ſeven, ſhould be obſerved as a ſabbath by his people, to the end of the world, and not under the Moſaic diſpenſation only.

This may be argued, from the inſtitution of a holy ſabbath, which God bleſſed and ſanctified, when he firſt made man: Having himſelf wrought ſix days, and finiſhed the work of creation, he reſted on the ſeventh. And this is mentioned in the fourth commandment as a reaſon, why men, after they had attended to ſecular buſineſs ſix days, ſhould reſt from ſuch labour, and obſerve the ſeventh day as a holy ſabbath.

And the command, to remember the ſabbath day, to keep it holy, &c. being given from Mount Sinai, and written on one of the tables of ſtone, and put into the ark with the reſt of the commands, containing the moral law, which is perpetually binding on all men, and in this way diſtinguiſhed from thoſe particular precepts which were temporary: This is a ſtrong argument, that it is equally

perpetual

perpetual with the other nine commands, and points out the duty of all men, at all times, to whom this command ſhall be made known. If this command reſpected that nation only, and were to ceaſe when the Moſaic diſpenſation ended, it cannot be accounted for, that it ſhould be revealed in the ſame peculiar manner, with that in which the moral law was revealed, and incorporated with the moral law, written with it, on tables of ſtone, and put into the ark: It has all the external marks of being perpetual and binding on all men, which attend the reſt of the commands of the moral law.

Moreover, there are ſome things ſaid in the ſcripture, which indicate, that it is the will and deſign of God, that the command to keep holy the ſabbath day, ſhould take place and be obſerved under the goſpel. The fifty ſixth chapter of Iſaiah, is evidently a prophecy of goſpel times; and there, keeping the ſabbath from polluting it, is repeatedly mentioned, as an important duty, to which promiſes are made. And in the eleventh chapter are theſe words, with reference to Chriſt and the goſpel diſpenſation. "And in that day, there ſhall be a root of Jeſſe, which ſhall ſtand for an enſign of the people: To it ſhall the Gentiles ſeek, *and his reſt ſhall be glorious.*" The word tranſlated *reſt*, is the ſame, which in other places is tranſlated *ſabbath*. His ſabbath ſhall be glorious. And it is not improbable that the Pſalmiſt has reference to the firſt day of the week, as diſtinguiſhed and appointed by Chriſt, and made holy by him, as the day on which he roſe from the dead. He foretells the reſurrection of Chriſt in the following words. "The ſtone which the builders rejected, is become the head of the corner." Theſe words are cited by the Apoſtle Peter, and applied to the reſurrection of Chriſt.* The Pſalmiſt adds, "This is the Lord's doing, it is marvellous in our eyes. *This is the day which the Lord hath made*; we will rejoice and be

* Acts iv. 11.

be glad in it."* Theſe words, "This is the day which the Lord hath made," conſidered in their connexion with the foregoing, and referring to the reſurrection of Chriſt, may naturally be underſtood of the day on which Chriſt roſe, as a day of the week, which ſhould be a joyful day to the church, on which this great and happy event ſhould be celebrated by believers in Chriſt to the end of the world; it being made by him, and appointed to be a holy ſabbath of reſt, and peculiar gladneſs and praiſe.

2. The fourth command in the decalogue, does not ſpecify any particular day of the week, to be kept holy as a ſabbath; but only commands men to obſerve one day in ſeven, as a holy ſabbath. "Six days ſhalt thou labour, and do all thy work, but the ſeventh day is the ſabbath of the Lord thy God." We muſt look ſome where elſe in divine revelation, to find, what day of the week is to be obſerved as a ſabbath, and when to begin to reckon. The Iſraelites were told, which day of the week they ſhould keep holy as a ſabbath; but not in this command. The day of the week on which their ſabbath ſhould be, was made known to them, before this command was given from Mount Sinai; therefore, this command obliged them to keep the ſeventh day of the week as their ſabbath. And when Chriſt made it known to his church, that it was his will, that the firſt day of the week, on which he roſe from the dead, ſhould be obſerved as a ſabbath, he having aboliſhed the Jewiſh ſabbath; this laid chriſtians under as great obligations to keep the firſt day of the week, as their ſabbath, as the Jews were under to keep the ſeventh day: And this did not in the leaſt degree, ſet aſide, or alter the fourth command; for chriſtians remember the ſabbath day to keep it holy, when they, having attended to their ſeculiar buſineſs ſix days, keep the ſeventh day as a holy day of reſt from

* Pſalm cxviii. 22, 23, 24.

from all unneceſſary worldly employment: And the fourth command, as much binds them, to keep their ſabbath on the firſt day of the week, as it did the children of Iſrael to keep the ſeventh day. The evidence, that Chriſt has revealed this to be his will, has been briefly ſtated above.

3. The Jewiſh ſabbath was not to be perpetual; but did ceaſe and vaniſh away with other types and ſhadows of the Moſaic diſpenſation, being equally a ſhadow with them, and in ſome reſpects the greateſt and moſt remarkable type, which will be more fully conſidered under the next particular. That the weekly Jewiſh ſabbath is aboliſhed, ſeems to be expreſsly aſſerted by the Apoſtle Paul, in the words which have been mentioned.* But ſince the ſabbath of the fourth command is to be perpetual; and the Jewiſh ſabbath was not ſo; it follows, that another day of the week is appointed by Chriſt, who is Lord of the ſabbath, to be obſerved by his church, which appears, from what has been obſerved above, to be the firſt day of the week.

4. There is no evidence from ſcripture, that the ſabbath, which God gave to the people of Iſrael, by Moſes, was on the ſame day of the week with that, which was inſtituted when the work of creation was finiſhed; but it is very probable, if not certain, that it was not.

The day on which God reſted from the work of creation; and which he bleſſed and ſanctified, to be an holy ſabbath for man, was the ſeventh day from the beginning of the creation: But it was really the firſt day of Adam's life. He was created on the latter part of the ſixth day, but ſoon fell into a deep ſleep, and had no great enjoyment or thought, till the next day. It is certain, the ſabbath day was the firſt whole day of his life, and he would naturally begin to reckon time and weeks, from that

* Col. ii. 16, 17.

that day, as the firſt day in the rotation of weeks.* This day was obſerved by the antideluvian church, and by Noah, and his poſterity, as the firſt day of their week; which has continued by an uninterrupted rotation of weeks, to this day. When mankind, after the flood, corrupted their religion, and apoſtatized from the inſtituted worſhip of the only true God, to idolatry, and deified, and worſhipped the ſun, moon and ſtars, which was the firſt kind of idolatry practiſed by mankind, they conſecrated their ſabbath, which was the *firſt* day of their week, and conſidered as a high day, the moſt important and honourable of any of the days of the week, to the ſun, which is the firſt and brighteſt luminary of the heavens, devoting this day to the worſhip of this god. And hence it obtained the name of *ſunday*: That is, the day of the ſun, as it was devoted to the worſhip of this heavenly luminary: As moſt, or all the other days of the week, have had names given them from the particular planets, to the worſhip of which, they were devoted. The original ſabbath, or the firſt day of the week, being thus perverted, God ſaw fit, for this, and other reaſons, ſome of which will be mentioned, to appoint another day of the week to be a ſabbath to the children of Iſrael, when he brought them out of Egypt. He ordered it ſo that they ſhould paſs through the red ſea, on the ſeventh day of the week, which completed their redemption, and deliverance from Egypt; and he appointed that day of the week, to be their ſabbath, in commemoration of this remarkable deliverance; on which day, they praiſed God, for this redemption, and ſang the ſong

* See Bedford's *Scripture Chronology, demonſtrated by Aſtronomical Calculations*; and Kennedy's *Complete Syſtem of Aſtronomical Chronology, Unfolding the Scriptures*. In which they have undertaken to demonſtrate by aſtronomical calculations, that the ſeventh day, from the beginning of the creation, has been reckoned the firſt day of the week, from that time to this.

ſong recorded in the fifteenth chapter of Exodus. And in the next chapter this their ſabbath is firſt mentioned; and was probably the ſtatute, and ordinance which God made with that people, ſpoken of, chapter xv. verſe 25. And when ſome of the people went out on the ſeventh day to gather manna, and found none, the Lord ſaid, "See that the Lord hath given you on the ſabbath, therefore, he giveth you on the ſixth day, the bread of two days." *The Lord hath given you the ſabbath.* This naturally expreſſes his having then appointed a day to be their ſabbath, as peculiar to that people; and not that he had appointed a ſabbath for all mankind, when men were firſt created. There were two reaſons, if not more, for appointing this ſeventh day of the week, to be their ſabbath.

Firſt, This was ſuited, with many other laws, which were given to them, to keep them a diſtinct and ſeparate people, from other nations, and prevent their joining with others in their idolatrous improvement of the firſt day of the week. This was then obſerved by the nations round them, as a high day, and a feſtival in honour of the ſun, and other gods, which they worſhipped, and it was of great importance, that they ſhould be kept a diſtinct people, and not join with them. Their keeping another day of the week for their ſabbath, was ſuited to do this as much or more than any other law which was given to them, for this end, excepting circumciſion.—Accordingly, they were in after ages, mentioned with contempt, and ridiculed by the heathen for this peculiarity.

Secondly, As their deliverance out of Egypt was a great and remarkable event, and a deſigned type and pledge of the redemption and ſalvation of the church by Chriſt, it was proper, and of great importance, that it ſhould be kept in mind, and commemorated by a day appointed

to be obſerved out of a particular reſpect to that event. Therefore, that day of the week was fixed upon by God, to be their weekly ſabbath, on which this deliverance was completed. This appears to be the truth reſpecting this appointment, from the words of Moſes, when ſpeaking to them of the command of God, to keep their ſabbath, he ſays, God commanded them to keep it, out of reſpect to this deliverance. "Keep the ſabbath day, to ſanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee. And remember that thou waſt a ſervant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a ſtretched out arm: THEREFORE, *the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the ſabbath day.*"* This muſt reſpect the ſeventh day ſabbath, which was peculiar to them, appointed out of reſpect to that deliverance, and more eſpecially to commemorate that, not only as a great event in itſelf, but as a remarkable type of the ſpiritual and eternal redemption of the church of Church, which is mentioned and referred to in ſcripture, as ſuch.† This is the reaſon of God's appointing the ſeventh day of the week for *their* ſabbath, and commanding *them* to keep it as a ſabbath day; but is no reaſon why other nations, and mankind at all times, ſhould obſerve a ſabbath. Therefore, in the fourth command, which was written on one of the tables of ſtone, and put into the ark, and is binding on all men, in all ages, this is not mentioned as a reaſon for obſerving it; nor is any particular day of the week pointed out, as has been obſerved. The ſeventh day of the week had been before given to the Iſraelites for their ſabbath; and Moſes gives the reaſon for this particular appointment and command of God to them, in the words above rehearſed. And the fourth command, in the decalogue, was a command to them, to keep the ſeventh day of the week as a ſabbath, becauſe God had before fixed

* Deut. v. 15. † See Iſai. li. 9, 10, 11. 1. Cor. x. 1—11. Jude v.

fixed on this day for them to obſerve. But it preſcribes no particular day to any other people; unleſs it be the firſt day of the week, ſanctified by God, and handed down from the firſt ſabbath; and which has been eſtabliſhed by Chriſt, to be the holy ſabbath for chriſtians; which lays the chriſtian church under as great obligations from the fourth command, to obſerve the firſt day of the week, as their ſabbath, as thoſe under which the Iſraelites were, to obſerve the ſeventh day of the week as their ſabbath.

The ſeventh day ſabbath, being given to the Moſaic church as a commemoration of their deliverance out of Egypt, which was a diſtinguiſhed type in that typical church, was itſelf therefore a typical inſtitution, and a ſhadow of good things to come, as was the paſſover, and other feſtivals in that church. Therefore, with truth and the greateſt propriety, the Apoſtle Paul mentions their weekly ſabbaths, with other Moſaic inſtitutions, as ſhadows of things to come, which of courſe ceaſed and were done away, when the things of which they were types and ſhadows, took place.* And then the ſabbath took place according to its original inſtitution and courſe, on the firſt day of the week; and perfectly agreeable to the fourth command, and in a degree more ſo than the Jewiſh ſabbath.

5. Upon the whole, it muſt be obſerved, that ſome time ſhould be fixed upon, and ſet apart, and diſtinguiſhed from other time, to be in a peculiar manner devoted to the exerciſes of piety, and public worſhip, in which all pious men and chriſtians ſhould agree and unite, appears reaſonable, deſirable, and important. If this were left to men, they would not be competent judges of the proportion of time, that it would be moſt ſuitable and proper to be ſet apart for thoſe purpoſes; and could never agree in the particular days, and the preciſe pro-

* Col. ii. 16, 17.

portion of time that ſhould be thus diſtinguiſhed and improved. And if they could do all this, they have no power or authority, to make one part of time, or one day more ſacred or relatively holy, than another. God alone, who is the owner and Lord of time, and of all things, can make this diſtinction, and in this ſenſe *ſanctify* any day or part of time, and ſet it apart for particular holy purpoſes; and he only has authority to command men to obſerve it accordingly, and keep it holy. And he only knows what proportion of time is wiſeſt and beſt to be thus ſanctified; ſo as to be beſt ſuited to anſwer the purpoſes of it, and circumſtances of man, to promote the good of his church. It is therefore deſirable, and to be expected, that God would determine this, in the revelation which he gives to the world. Accordingly, we find he has done it, when he firſt made man, ſpecifying the day which he bleſſed and ſanctified, and ſetting an example to man, that after ſix days of labour, he ſhould reſt from his worldly buſineſs on the ſeventh day, and keep it holy. This he afterwards inſerted among thoſe commands containing a perpetual moral law, commanding men, all men, without diſtinction, to obſerve the ſabbath, and keep one day in ſeven holy, or the ſeventh day, after ſix days labour. In the mean time, for particular, wiſe, important reaſons, he ſeparated a people from all other nations, and formed them into a church, giving them laws and ſtatutes, ſuited to keep them ſeparate from the idolatrous nations, and to point out by types and emblems, the Redeemer of man, and the great ſalvation by him; and to prepare the way for his coming into the world, dying and riſing again, and ſetting up his kingdom on earth: And among the reſt, they received a command to keep the ſeventh day of the week, as a holy ſabbath, which was much inſiſted upon during that diſpenſation, as an important article, which

ſhould

ſhould be to them a conſtant viſible ſign, that they were a holy people, devoted to God. When the end of this ſeventh day ſabbath was fully anſwered, and the thing of which this, and the event it was to commemorate, were a type and ſhadow, took place, it was aboliſhed, and the ſabbath of the firſt day of the week, took place, by his order and command, who is Lord of the ſabbath, in commemoration of his reſurrection from the dead, and the eternal redemption of the church, which he had obtained by his blood, and which he aroſe to accompliſh.

And nothing could be more ſuited by this inſtitution to gratify and pleaſe the friends of Chriſt, than to have the firſt day of the week, on which their dear Lord aroſe from the dead, conſecrated and ſanctified; that they may keep a holy ſabbath, on this day, and honour and praiſe him, and celebrate the work of redemption. This has been to the people of God in general, in the chriſtian church ever ſince, a high day, a delight, holy of the Lord, and honourable; and is ſo even now. And if any of the true ſervants of Chriſt, be otherwiſe minded, God will ſhow it unto them.*

IT has been a queſtion, upon which profeſſing chriſtians have been divided, When a chriſtian ſabbath begins? At what time of the twenty four hours of the day, it commences? Whether at the ſetting of the ſun,

* That the firſt day of the week, which is the chriſtian ſabbath, is the ſame day of the week, which was ſanctified as a ſabbath, when creation was finiſhed, appears probable from what has been obſerved, and it is thought, ſerves in ſome degree, to illuſtrate this point. But though this ſuppoſition be natural and probable, and there be nothing in ſcripture inconſiſtent with it; yet it is not pretended to be demonſtration, or neceſſary, in order to prove the firſt day of the week, to be the chriſtian ſabbath. For if what has been ſuppoſed, and obſerved, concerning this, be conſidered as meer conjecture, and without any foundation, the other arguments for the abolition of the Jewiſh ſabbath, and the divine appointment of the firſt day of the week, to be the chriſtian ſabbath, ſtand good, and ſufficiently eſtabliſh the point.

at midnight, or when the light comes on in the morning? Some have ſuppoſed that it cannot be certainly determined; and that it is of no importance, when it begins; that if perſons act conſcientiouſly, and according to their own judgment, though they differ, and one obſerves the night preceding the day; and the other the night following the day; they are equally right, and do equally well. Others, being at a loſs about the time of beginning the ſabbath, will obſerve both the evening before, and that after the day, that they may be ſure to keep the right.

Perhaps the following obſervations may give ſome light on this point. They are offered to the ſerious, attentive, and unprejudiced.

1. If God has ſanctified one day in ſeven, or the firſt day of the week, all the hours of that day, being twenty four, are holy time; and there is a time when they begin, independent of us, or our opinion or practice. Man cannot make any time holy. If God have not done it, there is no holy time; and if it be made holy by him, it is ſo, independent of man; and the hours which are ſanctified, are fixed and ſtated, ſo that when the firſt hour of that time comes, it is holy time, and continues ſo, till twenty four hours be paſſed, and then holy time ceaſes, till another ſabbath comes on, and commences at the ſame hour that the preceding ſabbath did. And men cannot change or commute it, by neglecting that time which God has ſanctified, and keeping ſome other day, or hours of another day, as holy time. Therefore, if the firſt day of the week be ſanctified, the preciſe hours of that day from beginning to end, and when they begin, are fixed, and all thoſe hours are holy time, and not thoſe which precede or follow; and it is a piece of ſuperſtition to keep them as holy time. Therefore,

2. We have reaſon to believe and be ſure, that there is light enough in the Bible to diſcover to every chriſtian, who

who will faithfully uſe the advantages he has, to get light on this head, when, or at what time the ſabbath begins, as well as what day of the week is ſanctified as a ſabbath. For if ſuch light and information be not given, the command to keep the day holy, cannot reach him, as he has no capacity to obey it. There may be light enough in the ſcripture to determine this; and yet not be ſeen by chriſtians, through ſome blameable defect in them. They may be too inattentive, or prejudiced, or both, and follow the opinion of others, without properly examining for themſelves, with that care and honeſt impartiality, which becomes a chriſtian; and be ſatisfied with arguments, which really have no weight in them. If this be not decided by any one expreſs declaration in ſcripture, telling when the ſabbath is to begin, it may be as clearly revealed otherwiſe, to an attentive, honeſt diſcerning mind. Whatever propoſition or truth, clearly follows from what God has ſaid in his word, from beginning to end, is part of divine revelation, and is the light and truth it contains, or is diſcovered by it.

3. This cannot be determined by the hour, or time of day, on which the Redeemer roſe out of the grave or tomb: For this is not certainly known, which would have been revealed, had the time of beginning the ſabbath depended on this: But if it were known, this would not decide the matter; for no reaſon can be given, why the day, which is ſanctified as a commemoration of that event, ſhould begin preciſely at the hour when he roſe from the dead. But if any reference be had to the time of the reſurrection of Chriſt, it is as probable, and perhaps more ſo, that he roſe ſoon after the Jewiſh ſabbath ended, which was at ſun ſetting, when the firſt day of the week did certainly begin, unleſs there were a chaſm of time between the ſeventh day of one week, and the firſt day of another, and which belonged to neither,

Matthew ſays, "In the end of the ſabbath, when it began to dawn towards the firſt day of the week, Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary came (or went) to ſee the ſepulchre." The ſame word in the original, here rendered *began to dawn*, is uſed by Luke, and rendered, *drew on*: "The ſabbath drew on;*" and it muſt have that meaning there. And the words of Matthew may be accordingly rendered: "In the end of the ſabbath, as the firſt day of the week drew on, as ſoon as the Jewiſh ſabbath was over, which ended at ſun down, theſe women went to the ſepulchre; that is, ſat out to go: But that earthquake and ſtorm, which Matthew goes on to relate, took place then, and ſtopped them on their way, and prevented their getting there till next morning; at which time of the earthquake, &c. Chriſt roſe from the dead, the firſt day of the week having began.† So that he roſe on the firſt day of the week, as much as if he had lain in the grave till midnight, or the next morning. But be this as it may, the time of the firſt day of the week, on which Chriſt roſe from the dead, whether between ſun down and dark, or at midnight, or at the dawning of the day, or at the riſing of the ſun, were it certainly known, cannot determine when the ſabbath begins.

4. The time in which men conſider their civil day as beginning, and ending, will not determine when the ſabbath, which God has ſanctified, begins, or ends. In this, men are arbitrary, and different nations begin their civil day, at different times and hours.

5. Time did not begin with light, or in the morning; but darkneſs, or night, preceded the light of the firſt day; and the evening and the morning were the firſt day, and not the morning and the evening. And ſo the ſucceeding days, in which the world was created, are reckoned to begin with the evening, or night, and to end with the light:

* Luke xxiii. 54. † See Mr. Knight's Harmony, on Matth. xxviii. 1.

light: "And the evening and the morning were the ſecond day," &c. Therefore, the ſeventh day, from the beginning of creation, which was bleſſed and ſanctified as a ſabbath, began with the evening, and ended with the light, or with the ſetting of the ſun. By this we learn, how time was reckoned by God; and at what time he fixed the beginning of the day. Not in the morning, or at midnight, but the evening which preceded the morning. And the firſt ſabbath which was ſanctified, began at evening, and included the night preceding the light of the day. And why is not this a ſufficient guide to us, in determining when the day is to begin, which God has ſet apart for himſelf, and made holy? We are told by him how he reckoned time and days, when they firſt began, and that he connected the preceding night with the following light, to make a whole day; and that he ſanctified ſuch a day, which began in the evening and ended at the next evening, and bleſſed it for the uſe of man; and may it not be ſafely and with certainty inferred, that all holy days, which God hath made ſo, begin with the evening, ſince there is no intimation in the Bible that he has altered his way of reckoning days, ſince the beginning of time? Nor has left it to men to determine as they pleaſe? But the contrary; for,

6. When God made known, and gave a weekly ſabbath to the children of Iſrael, and appointed other holy days, he ordered them to begin all of them at the evening, or going down of the ſun. This none will diſpute, who attends properly to his bible.

The Jews, when Chriſt was on earth, began their ſabbath at the ſetting of the ſun, and ended it at the ſame time of the day. This is evident from what is related by three of the Evangeliſts.* When Chriſt had attended the public exerciſes of the Synagogue on the ſabbath, and had cured a man found there, poſſeſſed by an unclean

* Matth. viii. 16. Mark i. 32. Luke iv. 40.

clean ſpirit, he went into the houſe of Simon: "And at even, when the ſun did ſet, they brought unto him all that were diſeaſed, and them that were poſſeſſed with devils; and all the city was gathered together at the door." The rulers and doctors among the Jews, held and taught, that it was not lawful to heal on the ſabbath; and ſtrictly forbid all perſons coming to Chriſt on that day. When Jeſus healed a woman whom he found in the ſynagogue on the ſabbath, "The rulers of the ſynagogue anſwered with indignation, becauſe that Jeſus had healed on the ſabbath day, and ſaid unto the people, There are ſix days in which men ought to work: In them therefore, come and be healed, and not on the ſabbath day."* Therefore, the people did not bring any of the diſeaſed to Chriſt, to be healed on the ſabbath day. But at evening, when the ſun was ſet, they came in crouds to the houſe where Jeſus was, bringing their ſick and poſſeſſed to Chriſt, to be healed. This fact renders it certain, that the Jews did then conſider the ſabbath as ended when the ſun did ſet; conſequently they began at the ſetting of the ſun. And the Jews have practiſed agreeable to this, from that time, down to this day; beginning their ſabbaths, and all their other feſtivals, at the going down of the ſun.

Jeſus and his diſciples, obſerved the Jewiſh ſabbath, which began, and ended, at the ſetting of the ſun. And the Apoſtles would of courſe, begin the chriſtian ſabbath at the ſame time, which ſucceeded the Jewiſh ſabbath, on the firſt day of the week, and began when that ended; and ought to do ſo, unleſs they had a particular command to begin it at a different time, of which there is not the leaſt intimation. Though the Jewiſh ſabbath is aboliſhed, and the firſt day of the week is appointed to be the chriſtian ſabbath, and thus *the day* is altered; yet this is no warrant to alter the time of *beginning* the day; but it muſt

* Luke xiii. 14.

muſt remain the ſame, unleſs God has manifeſted it to be his will that it ſhould be altered, and fixed another time, on which to begin the day, which he has not done. Since the change is only of the day, and not of the time of beginning it; and the firſt day began, when the ſeventh day ended, which was at ſun down; is not this ſufficient evidence, that it is the will of God, that the chriſtian ſabbath ſhall begin at the going down of the ſun, when the Jewiſh ſabbath ended? And does not this, in conjunction with what has been obſerved in the preceding particular, ſufficiently diſcover the will of God reſpecting the beginning of the holy days, which he makes ſo for the uſe of man? And is it not preſumption, and willworſhip, to begin the ſabbath at any other time of the day, without a divine warrant, ſufficient to counteract what God has done and revealed, in the inſtances which have been mentioned?

7. It is as proper and convenient to begin the ſabbath at ſun down, as at any other time, and in ſome reſpects, more ſo. A care and exertion, to have all worldly affairs and buſineſs finiſhed, ſo as to be laid aſide by that particular time, is a proper expreſſion of regard to a divine inſtitution. And if the heads of a family, and their houſehold be pious, and delight in the ſabbath, they will find no inſuperable difficulty, in ordinary caſes, to be prepared to meet and welcome the ſabbath, when the time comes on; and come together, and begin it in joining in ſocial worſhip. The Jews find no inſuperable difficulty or inconvenience, in punctually beginning their ſabbath at ſun down, when they commonly join in ſocial worſhip. And chriſtians may certainly, with equal convenience and propriety, begin their ſabbath at the ſame time.

CHRISTIAN

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

BAPTISM is an ordinance, or ſacrament, which Chriſt has inſtituted. This is to be performed by the application of water, to the perſon baptized, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt. In order to be a proper ſubject of baptiſm, a perſon, if adult, muſt profeſs his faith in Chriſt, and ſubjection to him, and engage to do all thoſe things which he has commanded; and appear to be a true chriſtian, or real believer in Chriſt; and to underſtand and believe, the great and eſſential doctrines, and precepts of the goſpel. This ordinance is to be applied to every one, who appears to be qualified, according to the rules which Chriſt has given, to be a member of the viſible church. And no one is to be conſidered and treated as a member of the church and kingdom of Chriſt, unleſs he be baptized with water, as this is the only door, by which perſons can be introduced into the viſible kingdom of Chriſt, according to his appointment. And all who are baptized according to his direction, are viſible members of his church. Chriſt, in his commiſſion to his diſciples, directed them to baptize all whom they proſelyted.* And we find, by the hiſtory we have of their preaching and conduct, that they practiſed accordingly. The words of Chriſt to Nicodemus, expreſs the eſſential qualifications, by which a perſon becomes a true and real member of his viſible church. "Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, except a man be born of water, and of the ſpirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."† By the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of heaven, when mentioned by Chriſt, he commonly means, his viſible church and kingdom in this world. By being born of the ſpirit, is meant that renovation

* Matth. xxviii. 19. † John iii. 5.

vation of heart, by which perſons become real chriſtians, and members of the inviſible kingdom of Chriſt. To be born of water is to be baptized with water, acording to the inſtitution and command of Chriſt, by which perſons enter into the viſible church, and become members of the viſible kingdom of God; without which they cannot enter into this kingdom; as this is the only appointed way, to enter into that covenant, of which baptiſm is the initiating ſeal, and ſo to be made a viſible member of this kingdom. The former, his being born of the ſpirit, does not make him a member of the viſible church or kingdom of God. But in order to this, he muſt profeſs his faith, and enter into covenant, and have this viſible ſeal of the covenant put upon him. As a perſon may be born of the ſpirit, before he is a viſible member of the kingdom of God, and muſt be ſo, in order to be a real and true member, at any time; and he is ſuppoſed and appears to be ſuch an one, when he is baptized, and by it becomes a viſible member of this kingdom: So a perſon may appear to be born of the ſpirit, and profeſs that which implies it, and be baptized, and enter into the viſible kingdom of God, and yet not be really born of the ſpirit. He is not a member of the inviſible church, but may be a member of the viſible church, admitted according to the rules which Chriſt has given to his church. He is not in the kingdom of God, in the ſight of God; but is ſo, in the ſight of men. But he who is born of the ſpirit, and is baptized, has entered into the kingdom of God, in the ſight of God and man, and appears to be what he really is, and ſhall be ſaved: Whereas the other, who is born of water only, is a hypocrite, and is a member of the kingdom of God only in appearance, that is, he is a *viſible* member only, and not a complete one, and has no title to ſalvation.

Baptiſm

Baptiſm is an appointed ſeal of the covenant of grace, both on the part of Chriſt, and of him who is baptized. It is a ſeal of the truth of the promiſes of this covenant, to all who believe, and are the true friends of Chriſt. And he who is baptized, makes this a viſible ſeal and token of the truth of his profeſſion, of his believing in Chriſt, and of his friendſhip to him; and his willingneſs to obey and ſerve him; ſo it it is a viſible, ſolemn covenant tranſaction, between Chriſt and him who is baptized; by which his ſins are viſibly waſhed away and forgiven, and he is viſibly intitled to all the promiſes of the covenant of grace, and numbered among the ſaved; and is really ſo, if his heart be anſwerable in any degree to his profeſſion, and this ſolemn tranſaction; as it is, if he be born of the ſpirit of God.

Chriſtian baptiſm, is not to be repeated, or adminiſtered, more than once to the ſame perſon, becauſe we have no precept or example for this in the ſcripture. And there does not appear any reaſon for doing it; for by this, perſons are introduced into the viſible church of Chriſt, as appearing to be real members of his kingdom. And if one, ſo baptized and introduced, be afterwards rejected and caſt out, for his viſible bad conduct; and after this, profeſs and appear to be a true penitent, there can be no viſible evidence that he was not a real chriſtian when he was baptized, and firſt introduced; therefore, there is no more reaſon for rebaptizing him, than for repeating the baptiſm of any other viſible member of the church; and though he has been rejected, his relation to the church does not ceaſe, on ſuppoſition he ſhall repent; therefore, when he appears to repent, he reſtores himſelf to the ſame ſtation in the viſible church, in which he was before.

Baptiſm is a public ordinance, and the church is to know who are baptized, and who are not; and it is therefore,

therefore, in ordinary caſes, to be adminiſtered in public. But there may be inſtances in which it is proper and neceſſary, to do it more privately; of which we have examples in the days of the Apoſtles.

There have been, and ſtill are, different and oppoſite ſentiments, among profeſſed believers, reſpecting the ordinance of baptiſm; eſpecially with regard to the mode of applying water in baptiſm; and the proper ſubjects of this ordinance: And many volumes have been written, containing controverſy on theſe points. And as no new light can perhaps be given now on theſe ſubjects in diſpute, it is not thought needful to enter particularly into this controverſy here. A few things however, will be obſerved, reſpecting theſe points, of the propriety and truth of which, every one will judge for himſelf.

1. The difference and oppoſition in ſentiment and practice, reſpecting this inſtitution, and all other chriſtian doctrines, duties and ordinances, is not owing to any want of light and inſtruction in the ſcriptures, on theſe points. To ſuppoſe this, is a reproach on divine revelation, and the author of it, and an implicit denial that it comes from God. All differences of this kind, are owing to ſomething defective and wrong in man, by which is he blind to that which is clearly revealed in ſcripture. This ought to encourage and excite every honeſt man diligently to ſearch the ſcriptures on this ſubject, as well as others, praying that he may not be blinded by prejudice or any wrong bias; but that his eyes may be opened to ſee what God has revealed. We are not to confine ourſelves to one part of the Bible in neglect of others; or to conclude nothing to be revealed, which we do not find aſſerted in expreſs words; but all parts of ſcripture are to be carefully examined, and compared together, in order to learn what is the whole revealed will of God: And whatever is the juſt and neceſſary conſequence from any one, or two, or

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more propoſitions or facts, which are expreſsly aſſerted, is as really revealed, as thoſe propoſitions and facts themſelves.

However we may differ now in ſentiment and practice, on the ſubject of baptiſm, and oppoſe and cenſure each other; when men ſhall be more upright, diſcerning, and diligent, in attending to the Bible, ready to receive with meekneſs, what God has revealed, as they will be in the days of the millennium, all thoſe differences will ceaſe, and what is ſo much diſputed now, will then be ſeen to be clearly decided in divine revelation: All former errors will be rectified. And doubtleſs it will then be ſeen, that we were all, more or leſs, in the wrong, on this point. We muſt therefore go to the law and the teſtimony; and if we think and ſpeak not according to this word, it is becauſe there is no light in us, while it ſhines ſufficiently clear in the Bible.

2. As to the mode of baptiſm, and the form and manner of uſing and applying water in this ordinance, to the perſon baptized, it does not appear to be decidedly fixed in the ſcripture; whether it be by plunging, pouring on water, aſperſion or ſprinkling. Each of thoſe ways have been embraced and practiſed by different churches, and ſome do inſiſt that plunging the perſon wholly under water, is the only ſcriptural mode of baptiſm, and that none are really baptized, who are not thus plunged.—But when the ſcripture is carefully examined, it will not appear that this form of baptiſm was inſtituted by Chriſt, or practiſed by the Apoſtles; or that the word in the original, tranſlated baptiſm, or to baptize, invariably ſignifies plunging the whole body in water. This has been particularly conſidered and proved over and over again, by writers on this ſubject. Therefore, their opinion and practice with regard to baptiſm, ſeems to be moſt agreeable to ſcripture, who think no particular form of applying

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ing water in baptiſm is preſcribed there, by precept or example, or by any thing that is there ſaid on this point; therefore, every church is left to adopt that particular mode which appears to them moſt decent and convenient; or that different perſons may be baptized in different ways of application of water, as ſhall be moſt agreeable to them, allowing all to be really baptized, to whom water is religiouſly applied by a proper perſon, in the name of the ſacred Trinity, whether by plunging, pouring on water, or by aſperſion and ſprinkling: As the chriſtian baptiſm does in no degree conſiſt in the particular manner of uſing and applying water; and that it is as real baptiſm, according to the inſtitution of Chriſt, when performed in different modes. And they ſeem to be rigid beyond any ſcripture warrant, and in a degree ſuperſtitious, who inſiſt that all ſhall be baptized by plunging; and reject all thoſe to whom water has not been applied in this particular mode, as not baptized. This is doubtleſs making that eſſential to this ordinance, which the ſcripture has not made ſo, and rejecting thoſe from chriſtian communion, and the privileges of the viſible church, whom Chriſt receives. If they who have adopted this mode of baptiſm, by plunging, did not make it a term of communion, and exclude all, as not baptized, who have not had water applied to them in this particular way, and not viſible chriſtians, the diſpute and contention, would be at an end; and they who think and practiſe differently, might hold communion with each other, and be members of the ſame churches; though baptized in different modes.

3. The proper ſubjects of baptiſm, if adult, are thoſe who by profeſſion, and in appearance, are believers in Chriſt, and true friends to him. None but they who are really ſuch, do in heart "put on Chriſt," and approve of the covenant of grace, and the way of ſalvation by him, and

devote themſelves to his honour and ſervice, which all who come to baptiſm, profeſs to do, and by this tranſaction, are admitted into the church, as the ſervants of Chriſt, and are viſibly intereſted in the bleſſings of the covenant of grace, and are conſidered as among the number of the ſaved, and are thus diſtinguiſhed from all others, as ſaints, or holy perſons. They muſt therefore be really holy, in order to put on this viſibility and profeſſion of it, with propriety and truth, which they do in baptiſm: For if they be not really ſuch, they are utterly unqualified in the ſight of God, to be admitted to baptiſm, as it is, on their part, only a piece of hypocriſy.—Therefore, none are to be admitted to this ordinance, but thoſe who in the view of the church, appear to be true friends to Chriſt, or believers in him, and really holy, and are juſtly conſidered by them as ſuch, who can judge only by outward appearance, and cannot certainly know what is in the heart.

That none but ſuch, who are thus viſibly, and in the charitable judgment of the church, and of thoſe who adminiſter this ordinance, believers in Chriſt, and really holy, are the proper ſubjects of this ordinance, and to be admitted to baptiſm, is abundantly evident from ſcripture, as well as from the nature of the tranſaction, and the reaſon of things. The Apoſtles, when they firſt began to adminiſter chriſtian baptiſm, and form a church, baptized none but ſuch who "Gladly received the word."* When the Eunuch deſired to be baptized, Philip ſaid, "If thou believeſt with all thine heart, thou mayſt."† This implies that he was not qualified for baptiſm, or a fit ſubject of that ordinance, unleſs he were a true believer in Chriſt; and that he could not baptize him, unleſs he profeſſed and appeared to be ſuch a believer. Hence all who were baptized, and formed into churches,

* Acts ii. 41. † Acts viii. 37.

churches, were conſidered and addreſſed by the Apoſtles, in their letters to them, as ſaints or holy perſons, believers in Chriſt, and friends to him; as thoſe who were ſaved, and heirs of eternal life: Or, which is the ſame, as real chriſtians: Of which every one muſt be ſenſible, who reads the Acts of the Apoſtles, and their epiſtles.

INFANT BAPTISM.

WHETHER infants, the children of viſible believers, and members of the viſible church, who have been now deſcribed, are the proper ſubjects of baptiſm, is an important queſtion, upon which profeſſing chriſtians are greatly divided; and which has been the ſubject of much diſpute in the three laſt centuries. It is not thought proper, or that it will anſwer any good end, to enter here very particularly into this diſpute, upon which ſo much has been written on both ſides. It will be ſufficient briefly to ſtate the chief arguments for the baptiſm of ſuch children; and the ground, and import of this ordinance, when applied to them.

ARGUMENTS FOR INFANT BAPTISM.

I. THE arguments may be exhibited under the following particulars.

1. It is obſerved from the ſcripture, that God, in his dealings with men, in his conſtitutions and conduct, and covenants with them, does connect children with their parents, and conſiders the former as included in the latter; ſo that the children take their moral character, and viſible relation to God, and derive good or evil, a bleſſing, or the contrary, from their parents, according to *their* character and conduct.

When God firſt made man, he conſidered the children of Adam as included in him, and they were included in the covenant made with him; ſo that they were to be bleſſed, or not, according to the conduct of their parent; and his moral character and conduct, was to determine and fix theirs. Though there were ſome things peculiar in this conſtitution; eſpecially as it was more general and comprehenſive, taking in all the natural deſcendants from Adam, to the end of the world: Yet thus much is to be gathered from it, viz. That children may be included in the covenant which is made with their parents, ſo as to take their moral character from them, and derive good or evil, according to the moral conduct of their parents, and that God has actually done this, in a perſpicuous and moſt ſtriking inſtance, in which he may be conſidered, perhaps, as ſetting a pattern and example of his conduct with mankind, in his public, covenant tranſactions with them; and that in all ſuch covenants, children are to be conſidered as included with their parents.

When God made a covenant with Noah, after the flood, his children and ſeed were included. And God's covenant with Abraham was with him, and his ſeed after him. And his children and poſterity, had favour and bleſſings in conſequence of this covenant, and out of reſpect to it. "He remembered his holy promiſe, and Abraham his ſervant. And he brought forth his people with joy; and his choſen with gladneſs. But thou, Iſrael, art my ſervant, Jacob, whom I have choſen, the ſeed of Abraham, my friend."* And God ſaved the children and poſterity of David from evil, and ſhewed them ſpecial favours, for his ſake, and out of reſpect to the covenant made with him.†

From

* Pſal. cv. 42, 43. Iſai. xli. 8. See alſo Gen. v. 4, 5, 24. Exod. vi. 5. Levit. xxvi. 42.

† 1 Kings xi. 12, 13, 32, 34, 36. 2 Chron. xxi. 7. Iſai. xxxvii. 35.

From theſe inſtances, it appears, that God has in fact, entered into covenant with parents, in which their children or ſeed, were included in ſuch a ſenſe and degree, that he has ſhewed favour to them, out of reſpect to ſuch covenants, and to the parents with whom the covenant was made. When God entered into covenant with the children of Iſrael, on the plains of Moab, their children, even their *little ones*, or infants, are expreſsly included in the covenant.* They are ſaid to enter into covenant with their parents. Therefore, infants and children did enter into covenant with their parents, as included with them, in the ſolemn tranſaction.

Agreeable to this, God ſays, "I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, viſiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me: And ſhewing mercy unto thouſands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."† Here, on the one hand, God ſays, he brings evil on the children and poſterity of wicked parents, as the conſequence of their iniquity. It hence is evident, that the moral character of the children of wicked parents is, by divine conſtitution, affected, formed, and fixed by, or in conſequence of the parents iniquity, who are enemies to him: For God has declared, that the child who does not imitate his father in his iniquity, ſhall not ſuffer for his father's wickedneſs.‡ The words cited from the ſecond commandment, are not repeated or contradicted, by this paſſage in Ezekiel, as ſome have ſuggeſted, but are explained; and hereby we learn, that viſiting the iniquity of the fathers upon their children, does not intend puniſhing the children for the iniquity of their fathers, whatever be the moral character and conduct of the children, and though they abhor and renounce their father's iniquity, and fear and love God. But their moral character is ſuppoſed to be like that of their wicked

* Deut. xxix. 10, 11, 12. † Exod. xx. 5, 6. ‡ Ezek. xviii. 1—20.

father; and is neceſſarily implied in the iniquity of their father, being viſited upon them; that they ſhall not renounce, but approve of the ſins of their father, and ſuffer natural evil or puniſhment, for their own diſpoſition and conduct, and becauſe their moral character and conduct is like their father's. Hence it appears, that the moral character of the children of wicked parents, is the conſequence of the iniquity of their parents, and is formed by it, as the foundation of the natural evil which they ſuffer; and that this is meant by viſiting the iniquity of the fathers, who hate God, upon their children. Theſe fathers do hand down, and entail to their children, their iniquity, or their own moral character; as there is no other poſſible way, in which their iniquity can be viſited upon their children.

On the contrary, God ſhews mercy unto a thouſand generations ſucceſſively of them who love him, and keep his commandments. This is God's covenant with ſuch; which appears from the words of Moſes, in which he has reference to the declaration and promiſe in the ſecond command. "Know, therefore, that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, and keep his commandments, to a thouſand generations."* From theſe words, we learn two things.

Firſt, That the mercy mentioned in the ſecond command, which God exerciſes and ſhews, is *covenanted mercy*, mercy which he has promiſed to them who love him, and keep his commandments, who have entered into covenant with him.

Secondly, That *thouſands* in the ſecond command, means a thouſand generations; and ſo is a promiſe of mercy not only to thoſe individual perſons, now on the ſtage of life, who love God and keep his commandments; but that theſe by fearing God, and keeping his commandments,

* Deut. vii. 9.

mandments, ſhall tranſmit and hand down mercy to the next generation, or to their children; and thoſe children, by faithfully following their parents ſteps, and keeping covenant, ſhall likewiſe procure mercy for their children of the next generation. And in this way, unleſs the covenant be broken by unfaithfulneſs and diſobedience, mercy will go down, from one, to another, even to a thouſand generations; that is, to all generations; and the courſe can never be interrupted; and in this reſpect it is an *everlaſting* covenant.

And that this is the meaning of the words in the ſecond commandment, is evident from the words themſelves, taken together. For the promiſe is ſet in oppoſition to the threatning: The threatning reſpects poſterity or children, or generations yet to come—"Unto the third and fourth generation." Generation is not in the original, but is neceſſarily underſtood, and therefore properly ſupplied by our tranſlators. Therefore, the promiſe has reſpect to the ſame; and "Shewing mercy unto thouſands," means a thouſand generations; and might have been thus tranſlated, and ſupplied, with as much reaſon and propriety as the foregoing clauſe, and agreeable to the ſenſe Moſes gives of the words, in the place juſt cited. As evil deſcends from father to children, to the third and fourth generation: So, on the other hand, mercy deſcends from parents to children, to a thouſand generations: That is, to all generations, without any limitation, a certain number, or many, being mentioned, for an unlimited one. The deſcent of evil from father to children, from generation to generation, is limited, and has an end, either by the interpoſition of mercy, to put a ſtop to the ſucceſſion of evil, as it ſometimes does, and ſo "mercy rejoices againſt judgment;" or by cutting off the poſterity, and putting an end to the ſucceſſion of evil, which is often the caſe. But mercy deſcends

from parents to children, from generation to generation, without limitation or end, unleſs the ſucceſſion be interrupted and cut off by diſobedience, and breach of covenant, by the parents.

And as the diſobedient parents tranſmit a bad moral character to their children, by their iniquity, this being implied in the threatning, as has been ſhown; and their iniquity is in this way viſited upon their children: So by the promiſe, which is oppoſed to the threatning, the love and obedience of the parents affects and forms the moral character of their children; ſo that their piety and obedience, does by the promiſe, convey ſpiritual bleſſings to their children, which is the mercy promiſed and ſhown to the parents who love God and keep his commandments, in oppoſition to the judgment and evil threatened to diſobedient parents. As their impiety and diſobedience is in judgment viſited on their children, in the manner above explained: So, on the contrary, the piety and obedience of them, who love God, and keep his commandments, is in mercy viſited upon their children, tranſmitting a good moral character to them, and all thoſe bleſſings which are implied in this; and thus, as the Pſalmiſt declares, "The generation of the upright ſhall be bleſſed; His ſeed ſhall be mighty upon the earth."*

All that is to be inferred from this paſſage, at preſent, (though farther uſe may be made of it before this ſubject is finiſhed) and from thoſe mentioned before, under this particular, is, that God, in his tranſactions and covenanting with men, does include children with their parents, and they are ſo connected together, that children derive their moral character, at leaſt in many inſtances, from their parents: And God, in entering into covenant with parents, extends the promiſes and bleſſings of his covenant to their children; which are ſuſpended on the character

* Pſal. cxii. 2.

acter and conduct of their parents, on their fulfiling the covenant, on their part, or not. It is preſumed this is undeniably certain, from the paſſages of ſcripture which have been here cited.

As this has in fact, been the way of God's dealing with mankind, and this is declared to be his method of conduct, and the tenor of his covenanting with his people, in the ſecond command; not as a temporary, but a perpetual rule of his proceeding and covenanting with man; and this appears rational and natural; no reaſon can be ſuggeſted, why it ſhould not take place under the goſpel, to as great a degree, if not greater, in God's covenanting with chriſtians; but this gives good reaſon to conclude, with great certainty, that this is the way in which God deals with chriſtians, and chriſtian churches univerſally; and that his covenant with them includes their children alſo.

This is thought to be one good and ſtrong argument, for the baptiſm of children, of parents who are viſible believers, and are in covenant with God, and members of a chriſtian church. Since the covenant has reſpect to their children, as well as to them, and the children are really included in it; this is a good reaſon why the ſeal of the covenant ſhould be applied to them, as well as to their parents; therefore, they are proper ſubjects of baptiſm.

2. That the above reaſoning is right and concluſive, from the facts and declarations recorded in ſcripture, which have been mentioned; that the children of thoſe who enter into covenant, are proper ſubjects of the ſeal of the covenant, and have an equal right to it with their parents, is confirmed by the expreſs direction and command of God, to adminiſter and affix the ſeal of his covenant to the children, as well as to their parents. Of this there is indiſputable evidence, both from precept, and from fact.

When

When God entered into covenant with Abraham, the father and pattern of all believers to the end of the world, and formed a viſible church in his houſe and family; and appointed circumciſion to be a token and ſeal of the covenant, his children, and all the children in his family, were included in the covenant, and by an expreſs direction and command, were to be circumciſed at eight days old. And this was the ſeal of the covenant, between God and the ſeed and poſterity of Abraham, and all who were proſelyted, and joined with them, by which they were viſibly in covenant, and diſtinguiſhed from others; and was conſtantly applied to children, from Abraham, down to the chriſtian diſpenſation, and till the right of circumciſion was expreſsly ſet aſide and aboliſhed in the church; and another rite appointed in the place of it by divine authority; which is baptiſm with water. And the circumciſion of infants was ſo ſtrictly enjoined, and made ſo important and neceſſary, in order to continue and maintain a viſible church, that when a parent rejected to circumciſe his children, the covenant was broken with reſpect to the children, and the parent, and they were cut off from the church.*

The Abrahamic covenant, and that into which the children of Iſrael entered, which is in ſubſtance the ſame, included the promiſe of ſpiritual bleſſings, even all the good things which are contained in the covenant of grace, which takes place between God and the viſible churches of Chriſt, and every individual believer; and the latter is the ſame with the former, in the eſſence and ſubſtance of it. Nothing greater or more is promiſed to man in the Bible, nor can more be promiſed by God, than that he will be a God unto them. This promiſe was contained in the covenant made with Abraham, and his ſeed.† And this promiſe contains all the bleſſings of the goſpel covenant,

* Gen. xvii. 9, 10, 14. Exod. iv. 24, 25, 26. xii. 48.
† Gen. xvii.

covenant, or the new covenant, called ſo, to diſtinguiſh it from the covenant publiſhed from Mount Sinai, in the form of a covenant of works; which did however, under that form, more darkly contain the covenant of grace.* And nothing more is to be promiſed, on man's part, than to *keep this covenant*, which was enjoined upon Abraham and his ſeed. "And God ſaid unto Abraham, Thou ſhalt *keep my covenant* therefore, thou and thy ſeed after thee, in their generations."† To enter into covenant with God, and acknowledge and receive him as their God, is to engage to do all the duty enjoined in the covenant, which is neceſſary, in order to partake of the promiſes; to love God, and keep his commandments: Which is expreſſed to Abraham in the following words: "The Lord appeared to Abraham, and ſaid unto him, I am the Almighty God; *walk before me and be thou perfect.*"‡

This covenant did indeed, contain a promiſe of temporal bleſſings, and of poſſeſſing the land of Canaan; but this does not make it eſſentially different from the covenant under the goſpel; for this contains a promiſe of temporal good things, which ſhall be proper and needed: It has the promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."§

Therefore, the token or ſeal of this covenant, on the part of thoſe to whom it was applied, ſignified a new heart, a heart to love God, a humble, penitent, obedient heart. And an heart oppoſite to all this, is called, an uncircumciſed heart. "Circumciſe therefore, the foreſkin of your heart, and be no more ſtiff-neeked. And the Lord thy God will circumciſe thine heart, and the heart of thy ſeed, to love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy ſoul, that thou mayſt live."‖

"If

* Jer. xxxi. 31, 32, 33, 34. Ezek. xxxvii. 27. Heb. viii. 10. Rev. xxi. 7.
† Gen xvii. 9. ‡ verſe 1. § 1 Tim. iv. 8. ‖ Deut. x. 16. xxx. 6.

"If then their uncircumciſed hearts be humbled."* "Ye ſtiff-necked, and uncircumciſed in heart and ears, ye do always reſiſt the holy Ghoſt."† "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly, neither is that circumciſion which is outward in the fleſh: But he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and *circumciſion is that of the heart*, in the ſpirit, and not in the letter."‡ Circumciſion therefore, implied, and did ſignify as much, and the ſame thing, as baptiſm does, when applied to the adult, or any other perſon.

The argument from this fact, and divine conſtitution, is ſtated in the following manner: When God formed a church in the family of Abraham, and in Iſrael his poſterity, upon the ſame foundation and covenant, as to ſubſtance, with that upon which the church under the goſpel is founded; requiring the ſame character in order to be members of it, and containing the ſame mutual promiſes and engagements; and appointed a token or ſeal of this covenant, by the application of which, perſons were introduced as viſible members of this church, and were diſtinguiſhed from all others, as a viſibly holy people: He did, at the ſame time, order this diſtinguiſhing ſeal of the covenant to be applied and adminiſtered to their children, and they were taken into covenant with their parents. The children of parents in the chriſtian church, are as capable of being included in the covenant with their parents, and of having the qualifications for baptiſm, and the things ſignified by it, as the infants of Abraham and his poſterity were, of being included in the covenant made with them; and of having the qualifications, and thoſe things which were ſignified by circumciſion, theſe being in ſubſtance the ſame; there being no other alteration or change, but that which is circumſtantial; and the ancient initiating rite and ſeal of the covenant,

* Levit. xxvi. 41. † Acts vii. 51. ‡ Rom. ii. 29.

covenant, changed from circumciſion to baptiſm with water, which is the chriſtian circumciſion. Therefore, the children of believers in the chriſtian church, are included in the covenant into which the parents enter, and are to have the initiating ſeal of the covenant applied to them, as being the proper ſubjects of baptiſm. And the divine command to Abraham, and his poſterity, to circumciſe their children, is as binding on chriſtians, who are the children of Abraham, to baptize their children; unleſs this command and inſtitution of God be expreſsly, or clearly, by neceſſary implication, repealed and ſet aſide; which is not to be found in the Bible, nor the leaſt intimation of any ſuch thing, but the contrary; as will be ſhewn under the next particular. It was a favour and privilege, to both parents and children, in the Abrahamic church, to have the latter admitted into covenant with their parents, and to have the ſeal of the covenant applied to them; and no reaſon can be given or thought of, why it is not as great a favour and privilege to both now, as it was then; no man therefore, can ſet this divine inſtitution aſide, unleſs he have a warrant from heaven to do it, without diſobedience to God, and injuring the church of Chriſt, and offending thoſe little children, the children of believing parents.

God, by inſtituting a church in the family of Abraham, ſet a pattern, and appointed a form of a church, in all the eſſentials of it, agreeable to his own wiſdom and goodneſs, in which he included both parents and their children, and ordered the initiating ſeal of the covenant to be applied to infants; hereby declaring them to be the proper ſubjects of it. This was a great favour and privilege to parents and children; and was therefore, ſtrictly enjoined, and much inſiſted upon, as an important duty, the neglect of which, brought the parents under cenſure, and excluded them from the privilege of the church, and

injured

injured the children. Therefore, this inſtitution continues, and is binding on the chriſtian church, and will continue to the end of the world; and there is no reaſon to expect or deſire, that it ſhould be ſet aſide, and be made to ceaſe; or that it ſhould be expreſsly enjoined again, and the command renewed, under the goſpel; becauſe this is wholly needleſs; it having been once expreſsly enjoined, and actually put into practice, a total ſilence about it afterwards, is a tacit command to continue the obſervation of it.*

3. It has been juſt now obſerved, that if nothing be recorded in the New Teſtament that was ſaid or done by Chriſt or his Apoſtles, contrary to including the children of believers, in the covenant with their parents, and baptizing them; then the conſtitution which God had already made in his church, with reſpect to this, muſt ſtand unrepealed; and it may be ſafely concluded, that it is the will of Chriſt, that this ſhould take place in his church, and that it actually did take place, and was practiſed, though nothing be ſaid directly concerning it. But it muſt be now obſerved, that there are things ſaid in the New Teſtament, which do imply this, and ſhow that the children of believers, were then conſidered in the ſame light and character, and treated as the children were in the Abrahamic church.

What Chriſt ſaid of little children and infants, and did to them which were brought to him for his bleſſing, is

* They who are expecting and demanding, that Chriſt or his Apoſtles, ſhould expreſsly renew and enjoin on chriſtians, the appointment and command of God, to apply to the infants of believers, the initiating ſeal of the covenant, in order to warrant men to do it; refuſing to acquieſce in the deciſion of this point, which God had already made; *if the argument above be concluſive*, are imitating Balaam, who did not reſt ſatisfied with the deciſion which God had once made, reſpecting his going to curſe Iſrael, but expected and required, that God ſhould ſpeak again, if he did really forbid his doing it. And are acting as the Scribes and Phariſees did, who demanded a ſign from heaven, to prove that Jeſus was the Meſſiah; while they diſregarded all the ſigns, and the abundant evidence, which had been given to confirm this truth.

is remarkable. The diſciples rebuked thoſe who brought them, for doing it; but Chriſt was much diſpleaſed with them for doing ſo, and ſaid to them, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven." And he took them in his arms, and laid his hands on them, and prayed for them, and bleſſed them.* Upon this the following things are to be obſerved:

1. They who brought thoſe children and infants to Chriſt, were believers in him, and friends to him; for none but ſuch would, in theſe circumſtances, bring their children to him, to obtain his bleſſing.

2. They were not brought to Chriſt to be cured of any bodily diſeaſe: For if this had been the caſe, and the children had need of healing in this ſenſe, the diſciples would not have rebuked them for bringing them to be healed; beſide, there is not a word ſaid, intimating that they were cured of any bodily diſorder, or that they had any.

3. Chriſt encouraged their bringing their little children and infants to him; and diſcovered his approbation, by ſhewing his diſpleaſure with his diſciples, for diſcouraging and forbidding them to do it; and charging them not to do ſo again; and by granting the requeſt of thoſe who brought them.

4. Chriſt, by taking them in his arms, and praying for them, and bleſſing them, declared that they were capable of receiving ſpiritual ſaving bleſſings; of being the ſubjects of all the bleſſings contained in the covenant of grace, and of all that is ſignified in the ordinance of baptiſm; and that he actually fixed this character upon them, and conferred theſe bleſſings, and numbered them among the ſaved; thoſe who are redeemed by him. For his praying for them, and bleſſing them, muſt imply all this;

* Matth. xix. 13, 14, 15. Mark x. 13, 14. Luke xviii. 15, 16.

this; as he was always heard, and they whom Chriſt bleſſes are bleſſed, and ſhall be bleſſed forever.

5. When Chriſt ſays, "For of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven;" he, in theſe words gives the reaſon, why little children ſhould be brought to him for his bleſſing. By the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven, which is the ſame, is meant the viſible kingdom of Chriſt in this world, or his church; in which ſenſe, this phraſe is moſt commonly uſed by Chriſt. What he here declares therefore is, that ſuch children as theſe, that is, the children of his friends, who believe in him, belong to his kingdom, and are to be members of his viſible church, and to be with their parents, numbered among the redeemed.

This declaration of our Saviour, ſets the children of believing parents, under the goſpel, in the ſame ſituation in which the children of the viſible members of the ancient church, in the family and poſterity of Abraham, were placed. Such were introduced with their parents, into that church and kingdom, and were as real members of it as their parents. But they cannot enter into this kingdom of God, the viſible church of Chriſt, in any way but by being baptized with water: Therefore, this is as proper, important and neceſſary, as was the circumciſion of children, under the covenant made with Abraham. If children of viſible believers, are to be conſidered as having a right to be viſible members of the kingdom of God, and to be treated as ſuch; in which light Chriſt has ſet them in thoſe words; then they are to be introduced to this viſible ſtanding in this church and kingdom, by the only door which Chriſt has fixed and opened for this, which is, by being baptized with water, in the name of the ſacred Trinity; or being born of water.

In ſum, what Chriſt ſaid and did on this occaſion, is entirely conformable to the inſtitution in the covenant

with

with Abraham, and the practice of the church of Iſrael, reſpecting children; and is really an approbation of it, and a manifeſtation of his will, that the children of his diſciples, and members of his viſible church, ſhould be conſidered and treated, as the children of Abraham, and his poſterity were, as being in the ſame covenant and kingdom with their parents.

What the Apoſtle Paul ſays to the church of Chriſt at Corinth, and particular members of it, reſpecting their children, is an evidence that they had the ſame ſtation and character in the chriſtian church, which they had in the church before the incarnation of Chriſt. "Elſe were your children unclean; but now are they holy."*

Here it is aſſerted, that the children of believing parents, even if one of them be a believer, are *holy*. The meaning of the word holy, here, is doubtleſs plain and determinate, and will appear ſo, when properly conſidered, and compared with other parts of the Bible. It is not certain that this word, eſpecially in the New Teſtamant, when applied to a moral agent, denotes a moral character, and means real holineſs, or the appearance of real holineſs, in the view and judgment of thoſe perſons who are to form a judgment of their moral character, and treat them accordingly? This is the ſame with *viſible holineſs*: That is, real holineſs in the ſight and judgment of men, who are to judge and act upon it. To be viſibly holy, is to be really holy in appearance to men, ſo far as they can, or have a right to judge; and is a ſufficient warrant for them to conſider and treat them who have this viſibility of real holineſs, as if they were in fact really holy, though this viſibility, or the ſigns and evidence by which they are to judge, be not infallibly connected with real holineſs.

In this ſenſe all the members of the Apoſtolic churches were holy. They were therefore called "Holy bre-

* 1 Cor. vii. 14.

thren," and SAINTS, which is the ſame word in the original, by which the character of children of believers is here expreſſed; and might be tranſlated, "Elſe were your children unclean; but now are they *ſaints*." This is an epithet common to all who were baptized and received into the churches, profeſſing faith in Chriſt, and entering into covenant with him, and with each other, to obey his laws, and to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. They were thus called ſaints or holy, and conſidered and treated as being really ſuch, becauſe they had that appearance in the ſight of men, according to the rules by which they were to judge and act in their treatment of them; and not becauſe they infallibly knew they were real ſaints. They were viſibly real ſaints, according to the marks and evidence, and the appearance they made in the ſight of men, by which Chriſt had ordered them to judge and act. Thus they were *viſible ſaints*: All the members of every church were ſo. They were baptized and received as members of the church, as appearing to be real ſaints, which is meant by a *viſible ſaint*. All who were not real ſaints, or really holy in the ſight of Chriſt, which was true of ſome, were hypocrites, and not what they profeſſed and appeared to men to be. In this caſe the fault was wholly in them, who made an appearance and profeſſion, not agreeable to the truth; and not their's who acted according to the rules which Chriſt has preſcribed, in forming a charitable judgment of them, and receiving them, as being really holy, and friends to Chriſt.

In this ſenſe, the children of the believer are holy or ſaints. Chriſt has put this character upon them, and directed his people to conſider and receive them as ſuch; which character is derived wholly from the believing parent. If the parent of the children be a viſible ſaint,

or

or holy perſon; that is, appears to men to be a real ſaint; the children are viſible ſaints, or holy alſo; that is, they have the appearance and character of real ſaints; as really as their parents, and are to be treated as ſuch, until this appearance ceaſes: How this appearance and viſibility may ceaſe, and on what ground it is derived to children, from their parents, will be more particularly conſidered in the ſequel.

It has been ſaid, that the unbelieving parent is ſanctified, according to this text; which is the ſame with being made holy: Such parent is therefore here repreſented to be as holy as the children; conſequently the latter are no more, and in no other ſenſe holy, than the former, according to theſe words.

Anſwer. No one can ſuppoſe, that to be ſanctified, and to be holy, do here expreſs the ſame character; or that the unbelieving parent is aſſerted to be holy, in preciſely the ſame ſenſe, in which the children of believers are holy. Therefore, the unbelieving parent being ſaid to be ſanctified by, in, or to the believing parent, whatever this may mean, does not in the leaſt determine what is the character of the children, which is expreſſed by their being called holy; and is as conſiſtent with their being aſſerted to be really holy, in the ſenſe which has been now explained, as it is with their being holy in any other ſenſe. And it is to be conſidered, whether the ſenſe here given, be not the moſt natural, conſiſtent ſenſe: And whether any other ſenſe, which is conſiſtent and unforced, has ever yet been mentioned, or can be ſuggeſted.

When the unbelieving parent is ſaid to be ſanctified by, or to the believer, the meaning is plain and eaſy, viz. That the believer may live in ſuch a connexion, conſiſtent with maintaining a chriſtian character; and the unbeliever may, to ſuch a degree, anſwer the ends of that

relation to the believer, as to be improved by the latter to the holy purpoſes of true religion. Thus the unbeliever is ſanctified to the believer, as every kind of food, and every creature of God, is ſanctified to ſuch, by the word of God, and prayer.* Therefore, the children of ſuch parents are holy: They derive their character from the believing, holy parent, and not from the unbeliever: Which could not be the caſe, if the unbeliever were not ſanctified by, or to, the believer, in the ſenſe above explained. Who does not ſee the difference between the unbeliever being ſanctified by, in, or to, the believer; and the children of the believer being conſequently holy? The latter, according to the uſe of the word in the New Teſtament, denotes a moral character, and fixes it on the children: The former has no reſpect to the moral character of the unbeliever; but of the believing parent, from whom that of the children is derived.

According to this view of the words under conſideration, the children of believers and members of chriſtian churches, are to be conſidered, and were conſidered by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and the primitive churches, as having the ſame character with their believing parents; juſt as the children of parents in the Abrahamic church, were conſidered and treated, viz. as being in the ſame covenant, and having the ſame character with their parents. The children of Abraham, and of Iſrael, when more particularly formed into a church, and they renewed and entered into covenant at Mount Sinai, after they had greatly apoſtatized, during their long ſervitude in Egypt, were denominated by God, "A holy nation, and a holy people." And all their children were included in this covenant, as has been ſhewn, and this epithet was applied to them, as much as to their parents: The ſeal of the covenant was therefore applied to them, by which they

* 1 Tim. iv. 5.

they were viſibly ſeparated and diſtinguiſhed from all other people, as a holy nation, both parents and children.

Is not this ſufficient evidence, that it was the will of Chriſt that the churches erected by the Apoſtles ſhould make no alteration with reſpect to children, from that which took place in the church, formed in the family of Abraham; but they are to have the ſame character and privileges with them? How contrary is this, to a ſuppoſed repeal of the inſtitution, by which children were received into covenant with their parents, and had the ſeal of it applied to them, in the family of Abraham?

And if the children of believers be holy, in the ſenſe explained, and were ſo in the Apoſtolic churches; are they not the proper ſubjects of baptiſm? Who can forbid water, that they ſhould not be baptized?

It may be added, that conſiſtent with theſe words, thus underſtood, this Apoſtle treated and addreſſed the children of believing parents, as being numbered with the ſaints, and ſo as ſaints. He addreſſes his epiſtle to the church at Epheſus, and to that at Coloſſe, To the *ſaints* at Epheſus, and at Coloſſe, and to no other perſons; and he ſpeaks to ſuch and no others, in thoſe, and in all his epiſtles. Yet here we find him particularly addreſſing, and exhorting children, as included in the church, and among the ſaints. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well pleaſing unto the Lord."*

Other paſſages in the New Teſtament have been often mentioned, by writers on this ſubject, in ſupport of the baptiſm of the children of believers: But it is not thought needful, particularly to conſider them here: Since theſe which have been brought into view, are ſuppoſed ſufficient to ſhew, that it is the will of Chriſt, that the inſtitution of a church in the family of Abraham, ſo far as it

* Eph. vi. 1, Col. iii. 20.

reſpects children, including them with their parents, and applying the ſeal of the covenant to them, ſhould not be repealed under the goſpel.

4. That the Apoſtolic churches and primitive chriſtians, did admit their children to baptiſm, as proper ſubjects of it, is argued from the general, and almoſt univerſal practice of it in all ages ſince, from that time. This is a fact, which writers on this ſubject have abundantly proved. From writings now extant, it appears, that infant baptiſm was practiſed in the chriſtian churches, in the ſecond, third, and fourth centuries. And it was aſſerted by writers in the church in thoſe ages, that it had been the univerſal practice from the days of the Apoſtles; and not one perſon appears to have denied it, or to ſuggeſt that it was not thus handed down, as an inſtitution of Chriſt. And it appears to have been the common practice in chriſtian churches for above a thouſand years, at leaſt; and it is to this day, the general practice in the chriſtian world. If this were not the practice of the firſt chriſtian churches, formed by the Apoſtles, it ſeems impoſſible that it ſhould be introduced at ſo early an age, as the univerſal practice, without oppoſition by any one church or perſon, as an innovation, and contrary to the practice of the primitive churches: and without any account, or notice given, when it was done, and by whom, and by whom it was oppoſed. Various hereſies took place in the churches ſoon after the Apoſtles days, by which chriſtians were divided in their ſentiments and practice in many things, of which we have the hiſtory handed down to us; informed when, and by whom they were introduced. And learned men, who took pains to inform themſelves, and were under advantages to do it, who lived in the early ages of the church, have given a particular account of the hereſies which had ariſen among chriſtians in different parts of the world,

world, and at different times; but they never mention infant baptiſm, as one of them; nor the omiſſion or denial of it, as a chriſtian inſtitution, by any church or ſingle perſon, who practiſed the baptiſm of any with water. By thoſe hereſies, profeſſing chriſtians were divided into parties, and became ſpies upon each other; and if they had not all been agreed in baptizing infants, and it had not been the univerſal practice, before thoſe diviſions roſe, but was introduced afterwards, it would have been impoſſible that they ſhould all agree in it; or that they ſhould be ſilent about it; and that none ſhould diſpute againſt it, and oppoſe it. If one party had adopted it, the other would oppoſe it, as an innovation, never known to be practiſed before, &c. But while they differed about many things, in this practice they were all agreed, as an inſtitution handed down from the Apoſtles.

Corruptions and practices have taken place in churches, eſpecially in the church of Rome, which are contrary to the inſtitutions of Chriſt, and were not practiſed by the primitive churches; but we have an account when moſt of thoſe were introduced, and of great oppoſition made to them by many; and they have never been univerſally received by the churches. If the baptiſm of children be not a divine inſtitution, it is a great error indeed; a great corruption and abuſe of the ordinances of baptiſm, and an utter perverſion of it, to a purpoſe for which it was not inſtituted. And it is perfectly unaccountable (and may we not ſay impoſſible) that it ſhould ſo univerſally take place in the church of Chriſt, and that ſo ſoon after the death of the Apoſtles, without any oppoſition by any one perſon, for many centuries, and no account be handed down, of the time when it was introduced, and by whom, if it were not univerſally practiſed from the days of the Apoſtles, but is an innovation, contrary to the original inſtitution and practice of the churches.

But if the baptiſm of the children of believers, be a divine inſtitution, and univerſally practiſed by the churches in the Apoſtles days, agreeable to the foregoing arguments; and was handed down from them in the chriſtian churches: Then its taking place ſo generally, and even univerſally, from the earlieſt times, for ſo many ages, can be well accounted for, and appears perfectly conſiſtent. This fact therefore, increaſes the evidence, and ſerves to ſtrengthen and confirm other arguments, which are thought to be in themſelves, fully concluſive, that the baptiſm of infants is a divine inſtitution, and was practiſed by the Apoſtolic churches.

THE NATURE AND DESIGN OF INFANT BAPTISM.

II. THE next thing propoſed, on the ſubject of infant baptiſm, is, to conſider the import and deſign of it, and what good ends it may anſwer to the parents and their children.

If it be evident and certain, that this is a divine inſtitution, it ought to be punctually attended and practiſed, though the reaſon, deſign, and end of it were not to be diſcovered, and none could tell or ſee of what benefit it can be to the parents or children. But if this were in fact the caſe, and it ſhould appear to us, only an unmeaning uſeleſs ceremony, and really of a bad tendency; this would greatly tend to blind us to the evidence, that it is indeed, an inſtitution of Chriſt; and to prejudice our minds, and ſhut our eyes, ſo as not to ſee it, however clear it may be. It is therefore, no wonder that perſons, who have imbibed this notion of infant baptiſm, and look into the

the Bible, and attend to the arguments which are brought in favour of it, and what is ſaid againſt it, with this prejudice on their minds, ſhould not be convinced that it is a divine inſtitution; but reject it with a great degree of confidence, and religious zeal. In this view, the enquiry now before us, is very important and intereſting. And if a rational and conſiſtent account, can be given of this inſtitution, and the ground and deſign of it be diſcovered by the help of the ſcripture; and it can be ſhown in what reſpect it is ſuited to promote the good of parents, and their children, and of the church; it will tend to remove prejudices, and to confirm the arguments which have been offered from the ſcripture, in favour of infant baptiſm.

This will be now attempted by offering the following obſervations and concluſions to the candid conſideration, and careful examination of thoſe who are willing to attend to this ſubject, and deſirous to form right conceptions of it, and to know what is the reaſon, deſign and advantage of this inſtitution.

1. The baptiſm of the children of believers, is a *covenant tranſaction*, by which, in ſome ſenſe or other, and in ſome degree, at leaſt, the children are viſibly taken into covenant, ſo as to be included in it; and are to be conſidered as ſharing in the bleſſings of it, with their parents. No leſs than this can be made of the tranſaction with Abraham; and the covenant made with him and his ſeed, in which the ſeal of the covenant was applied to them. And the ſame conſtitution takes place in the chriſtian church, with reſpect to children; and the appointed ſeal of the goſpel covenant, is therefore applied to them. If this were not a covenant tranſaction, which has reſpect to the children, and they were in no ſenſe included in the covenant, the application of the ſeal of the covenant to them, by baptizing them, would

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be an unmeaning tranſaction indeed; or rather would be a ſignification of that which is not true, and does not really take place. Nor would it anſwer to what was intended, and actually took place in the circumciſion of children in the Abrahamic church, which was expreſsly called the token of the covenant, and the covenant itſelf, which God made, and eſtabliſhed between himſelf, and Abraham and his ſeed. "I will make a covenant between me and thee. And I will eſtabliſh my covenant between me and thee; and thy ſeed after thee; to be a God unto thee, and to thy ſeed after thee. This is my covenant which ye ſhall keep between me and you, and thy ſeed after thee: Every man child among you, ſhall be circumciſed: And it ſhall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And the uncircumciſed man child, whoſe fleſh of his foreſkin is not circumciſed, that ſoul ſhall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant."* What can be more plain and certain, than thoſe words make it, that the children of Abraham were as really included in the covenant made with him, of which circumciſion was the appointed token and ſeal, as he himſelf was; and conſequently that all the parents in Iſrael, and their circumciſed children, were equally included in the ſame covenant? And who that believes in infant baptiſm, will deny that this is as much a covenant tranſaction as was the circumciſion of the children of Abraham; and that the baptized children of believers are as really and as much in covenant, as the circumciſed children of Abraham? Therefore, they who believe the baptiſm of infants to be a chriſtian inſtitution, have generally, if not univerſally, conſidered it as a covenant tranſaction, importing the children of believers to be included in the ſame covenant with their believing parents; though they may have differed in their notion of this covenant, as it reſpects children.

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* Gen. xvii.

2. This covenant tranſaction in baptizing the children of believers, is between God and the parents. It reſpects the children indeed, which are baptized, but they are incapable of acting in the affair, ſo as to enter into covenant, by any act of theirs. If they be brought into covenant, and the ſeal of it ſet upon them, it muſt be by what is done for them, and determined and acted with reſpect to them, in which they are the ſubjects, and not the agents; and all this takes place previous to their knowing any thing of the matter. In this, all are agreed.

3. A covenant is commonly underſtood to imply mutual engagements and promiſes, on ſome condition expreſſed or underſtood, between two parties, ſo covenanting. Thus, when God enters into covenant with men, or a covenant takes place between them, he propoſes and promiſes to grant ſome good thing to them, on ſome condition to be performed on their part; which they engage and promiſe to perform, approving of the propoſal, and complying with it. But the condition on which the divine promiſes is made in the covenant which he propoſes, and into which he enters with man, is all implied in a cordial approbation of the promiſe, and acceptance of the thing promiſed; and perſeverance in this, and expreſſing it in a proper and anſwerable conduct; for this is to love God, and keep his commandments.

The abſolute, unconditional promiſes of God, are indeed called a covenant, and he is ſaid to make a covenant with thoſe to whom he makes ſuch promiſes. Thus he is ſaid to eſtabliſh his covenant with Noah and his ſeed, in which all mankind, who were to exiſt after that, are comprehended; and with every living creature.* Which covenant, conſiſted in an abſolute unconditional promiſe, that

* Gen. ix. 8, &c.

that he would not deſtroy the world again by a flood.—Of the ſame kind are many of the promiſes made to the church; that God will never forſake it; but that it ſhall continue to the end of the world, and the gates of hell ſhall never prevail againſt it; and that it ſhall yet proſper and flouriſh and fill the world, &c.

The covenant of grace, which is called the new covenant, is in a ſenſe unconditional. As it is eſtabliſhed with the redeemed, the church as a body, it is called a promiſe and teſtament, in which are contained all the good things which are implied in the complete, eternal redemption of the redeemed church: And whatever is neceſſary on their part, is compriſed in the promiſe, in which God engages that it ſhall take place, and be wrought in them, ſo that they ſhall will and do the things neceſſary to their being in covenant with God, and ſharing in all the bleſſings of it. This is evident from the particular deſcription which the Apoſtle Paul gives of this covenant, in a quotation from the Prophet Jeremiah. "Behold the days come, ſaith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the houſe of Iſrael, and with the houſe of Judah. This is the covenant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael, after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord; I will put my laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts: And I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a people. And they ſhall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, ſaying, Know the Lord: For all ſhall know me, from the leaſt to the greateſt. For I will be merciful to their unrighteouſneſs, and their ſins and their iniquities will I remember no more."* Here God promiſes to do all that is to be done; and if there be any condition neceſſary on the part of the church, it is included in the promiſe, and God engages that it ſhall take place. "I will put my

* Heb. viii. 8, 10, 11, 12.

my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and they ſhall be to me a people." This is to be conſidered as a condition which muſt take place in all of the redeemed church, and implies ſaving faith, or love to God, and obedience to him, in keeping his commandments. But in this covenant of grace, this condition of ſalvation, and all that is implied in eternal redemption, is promiſed to the church. This is the legacy, the teſtament, or promiſe which Chriſt has left to his church.

But this does not exclude, but neceſſarily includes, a condition, or ſomething which muſt take place in every individual, in order to his being intereſted in the bleſſings of this covenant, or being properly in covenant with God. This may properly be called a condition, the condition of the covenant, on man's part, as neceſſary in order to his being in covenant.

How the children of believers are viſibly included in this covenant, and may really be ſo, having the condition of it wrought in them, will be ſhown in what follows. But the obſervation in this particular, under which ſome digreſſion has been made, that it might not be miſunderſtood, is, that in the covenant tranſaction between God and the parents in the baptiſm of their children, there are mutually promiſes and engagements between them, which do particularly reſpect the children. What they are, will be conſidered under the following particulars.

4. The parent who offers his child to baptiſm, does expreſsly or implicitly renew his covenant with God, and dedicates himſelf to him, to love him and keep his commandments; and does renewedly lay hold of the covenant, acting for himſelf and child. He brings his child to Chriſt, for his bleſſing, and dedicates, and gives it away to him; and promiſes to bring it up for him, "In the nurture and admonition of the Lord," as one of Chriſt's children. All this is profeſſed, and promiſed

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in this visible, external transaction: And if this be done understandingly and heartily; or is a true expression of the heart of the parent, it is really done in the sight of God. This is true, in the view of the church, who look only on the outward appearance, and cannot see the heart. The parent is considered by them as sincere and hearty in making his profession and promises; that he does really dedicate his child to Christ, and will do all that is implied in bringing it up for him, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

What is implied in this engagement and promise, will be more particularly considered hereafter. Whatever this may be, all who believe the baptism of the children of believing parents is a divine institution will grant, that all which has been now expressed, is implied in the profession and promise made by the parent in offering his child in baptism.

5. Jesus Christ does, in this transaction, receive the child into the same visible standing and character with the parent, as a visible saint, or holy person, and orders the church to consider and look upon it in this light, as being one in their view, and so far as they are to judge, really holy, and among the number of the saved. Of this holiness, the child is as capable as the parent; and by the command of Christ, who has put this character upon all such children, and said, *they are holy*; they are to be considered and received by the church as such: That is, in appearance, to their view, really holy. He has commanded his church to receive all those adult persons who make a proper profession and appearance of real holiness, and to look upon them as being really holy; that is, to consider and treat them as being really what they appear to be, though they may not in fact, be really what they appear to men to be; though they may not be really holy, and there be no reason to believe

lieve that they are all ſuch; and how great the number is of thoſe who are viſible ſaints, that is, who appear to the church to be real ſaints, and whom they are commanded to receive and treat as ſuch, and yet are not really ſaints, none can tell. In like manner, he has commanded his people to receive their children, whom they bring to the church, in the ſame character with their parents, as really holy; that is, as appearing to them to be really holy, which is the ſame with being viſibly holy; becauſe he has put this character upon them, which he has put upon their parents, and ordered them to be called ſaints, or holy, though they may not be really ſo; and there may be as many, among ſuch children, not really holy, as there are among their parents, or the adult members of the church, or more. Their connexion with their parents, and having the ſame character put upon them by Chriſt, by ſaying, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of ſuch is the kingdom of God," and calling them ſaints or holy, is a good warrant to the church to receive them, with their parents, into the viſible, holy covenant, and apply the ſeal of the covenant to them, as the children of the parents of the ancient church were, and were called holy, and the holy ſeed.

Two reaſons may be given, why the redeemer has affixed the ſame character to the children of believing, viſibly covenanting parents, as he has to the parents themſelves, and ordered them to be taken into the ſame covenant, and to have the ſeal of the covenant applied to them, and to be numbered among the redeemed, both in his ancient church, and in that under the goſpel.

1. Becauſe he has ordered that thoſe who are made really holy, and are ſaved, ſhould be chiefly taken from, and found among viſible believers, and their children. Therefore, he has directed us to look there, for really

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holy perſons, that ſhall be ſaved, and no where elſe. He has, for wiſe reaſons determined, that real holineſs, and ſalvation, ſhall chiefly and ordinarily deſcend in this line, from believing parents to their children. Therefore, he has ordered them all to be looked upon by the church to be holy, and to be numbered among the ſaved; for the ſame reaſon that all adult profeſſing believers, are to be received by the church, as really holy, viz. becauſe they who are really holy and ſhall be ſaved, are to be found among thoſe who have this appearance, and are to be looked for among them; and one cannot be diſtinguiſhed from another, ſo as to be known to be really holy, and the other not; therefore, all ſuch muſt be conſidered as really holy, and have this character put upon them.

That it is God's common way, to convey ſaving bleſſings down from godly parents, to their children, and to bleſs the children for the ſake of their parents, may be argued from many paſſages of ſcripture; ſome of which have been mentioned heretofore. "The righteous is ever merciful and lendeth: And his ſeed is bleſſed. The juſt man walketh in his integrity; his children are bleſſed after him. Bleſſed is the man that feareth the Lord, and delighteth greatly in his commandments. His ſeed ſhall be mighty upon the earth. The generation of the upright ſhall be bleſſed."* God promiſes his church, which has a ſpecial reſpect to the goſpel church, that, he will bleſs them and their children with ſpiritual bleſſings, and the promiſe is made as much to their offſpring as to them. "I will pour water upon him that is thirſty; and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my ſpirit upon thy ſeed, and my bleſſing upon thine offſpring."† And ſtill ſpeaking of the church, he ſays, "As for me, this is my covenant with them, ſaith the Lord,

* Pſalm. xxxvii. 26. cxii. 1, 2. Prov. xx. 7. † Iſai. xliv. 3.

Lord, my ſpirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, ſhall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy ſeed, nor out of the mouth of thy ſeed's ſeed, ſaith the Lord, from henceforth and forever. They ſhall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble: For they are the ſeed of the bleſſed of the Lord, and their offspring with them."* "And they ſhall be my people, and I will be their God. And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them."† Thus the children are connected with their parents, and the good, the bleſſing, is repreſented as deſcending from parents to children; and the latter are included in the promiſes of good to the former. To the ſame purpoſe are the following words, which have reference to the goſpel day, "And the Lord thy God, will circumciſe thine heart, and the heart of thy ſeed, to love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy ſoul, that thou mayſt live."‡ And the covenant which God makes with his church and people, is repreſented as conveying bleſſings from parents to children, to a thouſand generations.§ Thus piety and ſpiritual bleſſings are repreſented as deſcending down in a line from parents to children, in the church; and there we are to look, and expect to find holineſs, if any where: And the children of viſibly pious, holy parents, are to be conſidered and looked upon as of the ſame character with their parents, and as the bleſſed of the Lord, and holy with them, ſo long as they do not diſcover the contrary.—Therefore, they are to be conſidered and treated as in the ſame covenant with their parents, and heirs of the ſame bleſſings with them, ſo long as they are incapable of acting for themſelves; which cannot be done without applying the ſeal of the covenant to them, by baptizing them. Agreeable

* Iſai. lix. 21, lxv. 23. † Jer. xxxii. 38, 39.
‡ Deut. xxx. 6. § Exod. xx. 6. Deut. vii. 9.

Agreeable to the repreſentation of ſcripture, which has now been brought into view, this appears to be true in fact, from what has taken place in the viſible church, in all ages. Ever ſince there has been a viſible church in the world, thoſe who have been ſaved, have generally been members of that, and this ſalvation has been handed down from parents to children, until by apoſtacy, and open breach of covenant, they have been deſtroyed, or caſt off by God, and ceaſed to be a viſible church.— When the church was erected in the family of Abraham, and was enlarged, as his poſterity multiplied; which continued down to the crucifixion of Chriſt, and even to the deſtruction of the temple and nation of the Jews by the Romans, before it was wholly abandoned and deſtroyed, true religion, real holineſs, and ſalvation, were chiefly confined to that church, and handed down from parents to children. The moſt of the truly pious and holy people in the world, were to be found in that church, during all that time, from generation to generation.— This church was therefore called the inheritance of the Lord, and his heritage. And is repreſented by the Apoſtle Paul, by an olive tree, which had flouriſhed a long time, a holy tree; but when the branches were broken off by unbelief, and an open breach of covenant, the Gentiles were inſerted in their place, into the holy root of this olive tree; and then the Gentile and chriſtian church, being in the foundation and eſſence of it, the ſame with the church which had ſubſiſted in the family and poſterity of Abraham, was the viſible holy ſociety, including parents and children. And as Chriſt ſays, ſalvation was of the Jews, while they continued branches in the holy olive tree; ſo when they were broken off, as a nation, and agreeable to the ancient prediction, the law went forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jeruſalem, unto the Gentile nations;

and

and many people heard, and ſaid, "Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the houſe of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths."* From that time, ſalvation was of the chriſtian church, and has been handed down from parents to children, to this day. And though ſome particular churches, or branches of the chriſtian viſible church, and however many and great, have been broken off by apoſtacy; yet ſtill the true viſible chriſtian church ſubſiſts, and will continue, from parents to children, to the end of the world. And the parents and children, of which it conſiſts, are viſibly holy, and heirs of ſalvation; and no others are, or can be ſo.

2. Another reaſon why the ſame character is affixed to the children of believers, which the latter ſuſtain; and why they are received into covenant with them, and have the ſeal of the covenant applied to them, and which may be conſidered as the foundation of what is obſerved as a reaſon of this, in the foregoing particular, is this, *That real holineſs, and ſalvation, are ſecured to the children of believers, by the covenant into which the parents enter with God, as it reſpects their children, if the parents faithfully keep covenant, and fulfil what they profeſs and promiſe, reſpecting their children, when they offer them in baptiſm.*

It has been obſerved, that parents offering their children in baptiſm, is a covenant tranſaction, between God and them, with regard to the children, to whom the ſeal of the covenant is adminiſtered; and that there are mutual promiſes and engagements, between the parties covenanting, without which it would not be a covenant tranſaction: And it has been alſo obſerved, that the baptiſm of children, has been generally conſidered in this light, by thoſe who have believed it to be a divine inſtitution, and have vindicated it as ſuch. The parent, in this tranſaction, profeſſes to devote his child to Chriſt,

* Iſai. ii. 3.

and give it away to him, aſking his bleſſing on it, as the greateſt and only portion he wiſhes for his child; and promiſes, that if he and the child ſhall live, to bring it up for Chriſt, as belonging to him, as one of his lambs in his flock, and bearing his mark and name, to train it up in the way in which he ſhould go, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

And Jeſus Chriſt, as the other party in this covenant tranſaction, viſibly receives the child as belonging to him; and on the condition which the parent profeſſes and promiſes to perform, he promiſes to bleſs the child, and beſtow ſalvation upon it. Therefore, ſuch children are viſibly ſaints, and numbered among the ſaved: For the profeſſion and engagements of the parents, are to be relied upon by the church; and that they will fulfil their promiſes, reſpecting their children; upon which the promiſe of Chriſt will be made good to them.

That this is the tenor of the covenant between God and believing parents, reſpecting their children, ſeems to be evident from the tranſaction itſelf in baptiſm, as it has been now ſtated and explained: And this will fully account for the children of believers belonging to the viſible kingdom of God, and their being called holy, or ſaints. But this may be farther confirmed by thoſe paſſages of ſcripture, which contain promiſes of ſaving grace, or of ſalvation, to the children of thoſe parents who are faithful in keeping covenant with God.

The covenant with Abraham, which has been mentioned, by which a viſible church was formed in his houſe and family, who is the father and pattern of all believers: And which covenant and church was handed down in his poſterity; and is not eſſentially different, but really the ſame covenant and church, which ſtill exiſts, ſince the natural poſterity of Abraham have been broken off or caſt out, by their unbelief and open breach

of

of covenant, as has been ſhown: This covenant with Abraham, included his children; and the promiſe it contained was made as much to his children as to him. The words of the promiſe are, "To be a God unto thee, and to thy ſeed after thee." The promiſe to be a God unto Abraham, included the bleſſings of the covenant of grace, even ſaving mercies, and it muſt imply the ſame when made to his ſeed. This promiſe was made on a condition, on Abraham's part, which is implied, and is expreſſed in the context. "The Lord appeared unto Abraham and ſaid, Walk before me, and be thou perfect: And I will make my covenant between me and thee."* The condition of the covenant, which was required of Abraham, is here expreſſed in theſe words, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect." And the condition of the covenant or promiſe, is again expreſſed in the following words, "This is my covenant, *which ye ſhall keep*, between me and you, and thy ſeed after thee: Every man child among you ſhall be circumciſed. And ye ſhall circumciſe the fleſh of your foreſkin, and it ſhall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you."† The external rite of circumciſion is not here intended, as the only condition of the covenant; but this implies the things ſignified by circumciſion, the ſign being mentioned, as including what was the import and ſignification of it. Therefore, it is here called the *token* of the covenant. When Abraham circumciſed his children, he devoted them to God, and promiſed to treat them as God's children, and educate them for God, which implied praying for them, and with them; inſtructing them in the things of this covenant, and directing and watching over them, and exerciſing parental care and government of them, and uſing all proper means, to lead them to know and do their duty to God and man, as ſoon as they

* Gen. xvii. 1, 2. † v. 10, 11.

ſhould be capable of acting for themſelves; at the ſame time, ſetting a good example before them in all his conduct, both of true piety towards God, and righteouſneſs and benevolence towards men. This was the covenant between God and Abraham, on Abraham's part, with reſpect to his children, of which circumciſion was the ſign, token, and ſeal; and though he circumciſed his children, if he did not in heart dedicate them to God, and faithfully perform the duties ſignified and promiſed in this tranſaction, he did not keep the covenant of circumciſion, but would break it, in the moſt important and eſſential part of it. Upon this condition, implied, profeſſed and engaged, in Abraham's circumciſing his children, God promiſed to be their God, to bleſs them with the bleſſings of the covenant, or that they ſhould be holy and happy forever. Thus God entered into covenant with Abraham and with his ſeed; and the promiſe was to him and his children, upon condition he would keep the covenant of circumciſion, which was a token and ſeal of the covenant, by both the parties covenanting.

This is here ſaid to be an *everlaſting covenant.* "And my covenant ſhall be in your fleſh for an everlaſting covenant."* True religion and ſalvation, would be tranſmitted to a thouſand generations, even without end, or to the end of the world, from parents to children, if parents were faithful in the covenant, as it reſpects their children. But this covenant may be broken, by the parent's not keeping covenant, and not acting up to his obligations, profeſſion and promiſes, with regard to his children, and being guilty of great and perſevering neglect of his duty, and by his unfaithfulneſs. This is evident from the words which follow, and is plainly expreſſed in them. "And the uncircumciſed man child, whoſe fleſh of his foreſkin is not circumciſed, that ſoul ſhall be cut off from his people: He hath broken my covenant."†

Upon

* v. 13. † v. 14.

Upon theſe words the following obſervations may be made.

Firſt. In the caſe mentioned, the child does not properly break the covenant; for he is not in the leaſt active or guilty in the affair. The covenant is broken by the parent's neglect of his duty to the child. Therefore, when it is ſaid, "He hath broken my covenant," the meaning is, the covenant is broken, as it reſpects the child, and by this mean the child is out of covenant, and excluded from the privileges of it; but the parent is the covenant breaker, as it is wholly by his neglect to circumciſe his child.

Secondly. As the covenant made with Abraham, was viſibly broken by a parent's refuſing or neglecting to circumciſe his children; ſo it was really broken by the parent, if he refuſed and neglected to do what is implied in the circumciſion of children, and what he profeſſed and promiſed in that tranſaction. Though he performed the external rite, yet if his heart were not anſwerable to it, and he were diſpoſed to neglect all the important duty reſpecting his children, which he profeſſes and ſolemnly engages, in performing the external rite of circumciſion, he breaks the covenant as much, and more, in the ſight of God, than if he had not circumciſed his children; and forfeits all the promiſed bleſſings of the covenant to his children; which were promiſed on condition of his faithfulneſs in keeping this covenant. Circumciſion, conſidered as a mere external rite and ceremony, was not the circumciſion which was commanded by God. If the moral exerciſes and duties implied in it, and ſignified by it, and which were profeſſed and engaged, did not take place, but were neglected. Theſe were of the eſſence of circumciſion; the external rite was but a ſign or token of the other, in which the covenant conſiſted; and if the things ſignified, profeſſed and promiſed, by

this external ſign and token, did not take place, the external ſign and tranſaction was a mere nullity in the ſight of God, and in the ſight of men too, ſo far as this was apparent, and known to them. This is expreſsly aſſerted by the Apoſtle Paul, when ſpeaking of circumciſion. "Circumciſion verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumciſion is made uncircumciſion. Neither is that circumciſion which is outward in the fleſh."*

Therefore, when a parent in Iſrael circumciſed his children, and neglected to do the duties enjoined, profeſſed and promiſed, of which the circumciſion of his children was a token and pledge, and ſo did not keep the law of circumciſion, but broke it; his children were, in this reſpect, as if they had not been circumciſed, and the covenant of circumciſion was as really, and as much broken, as if he had neglected to circumciſe his children; and his children were, by this neglect, cut off from the promiſes and bleſſings of the covenant. Can any thing be more plain and certain than this? What moral exerciſes and duties, reſpecting the children, the parent profeſſed and promiſed, and what was the law of circumciſion, in this reſpect, has been briefly ſtated above, and will be more fully explained, before this ſubject is cloſed.

Thirdly. Hence it appears, that the covenant of circumciſion, as it reſpected the ſeed or children of the parents, who circumciſed them, did not extend, in the promiſes of it, any farther than to the children thus circumciſed; though the parents were faithful in keeping covenant, and acted up to their profeſſion and engagements. They could tranſmit the bleſſings of the covenant, according to the promiſes of it, no farther than to their children, which were circumciſed by them. If theſe children ſhould neglect to circumciſe their children; or if they

* Rom. ii. 25, 28.

they ſhould circumciſe them, and yet not keep the law of circumciſion, but neglect the duties, with reſpect to their children, which they had profeſſed and engaged, the covenant would be broken, and their children be cut off from the promiſes and bleſſings of it. And thus, this *everlaſting* covenant, which, if faithfully kept, would tranſmit ſpiritual bleſſings and ſalvation to all generations, to the end of the world, may be, and has been broken; by which breach of this covenant, all the dreadful and prevailing evils and the curſe, which have fallen upon mankind, have been introduced, and ſpread over the world, agreeable to the words of God by Iſaiah. "The earth alſo is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; becauſe they have tranſgreſſed the laws, changed the ordinance, *broken the everlaſting covenant.* Therefore, hath the curſe devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are deſolate."*

But the following queſtion will be ſuggeſted here, which requires an anſwer.

QUESTION. IF ſpiritual bleſſings and ſalvation, the bleſſings promiſed in the covenant, be tranſmitted from parents who keep covenant, to their children, theſe children will be holy and obedient, according to the promiſe made to their parents; conſequently, their children will be holy and obedient alſo, and ſo on through every generation, to the end of the world. How then can this covenant be broken, ſo that any children in this line of ſucceſſion, ſhould be unholy and diſobedient? Muſt not holineſs and ſalvation, be infallibly tranſmitted from parents to children, to the laſt generation, according to this notion of the covenant, without a poſſibility of a breach of covenant.

ANSWER. THE covenant, as it reſpects the parents, in their own perſons, and the duties required of them,

in

* Iſaiah xxiv. 5, 6.

in order to their own ſalvation, is different from the covenant, and the duties required, as they reſpect their children. What regards their children is a diſtinct branch of the covenant, and differs from what reſpects their own perſons only.

The covenant, as it reſpects the individual perſon entering into covenant, promiſes ſalvation to him who believeth, even to the leaſt and loweſt degree of true faith, by which he lays hold of the covenant; it promiſes that all ſuch ſhall be finally ſaved; that they ſhall be furniſhed with every thing neceſſary for this, and ſhall be kept by the power of God, through their faith, unto ſalvation. The perſon entering into covenant, as it reſpects his own perſon, profeſſes this faith, and to devote himſelf to God in the exerciſe of it; lays hold of the covenant, and promiſes by divine aſſiſtance, relying upon the promiſed grace of God, to live a life of faith and holineſs.

The covenant, as it reſpects the children of believing parents, and includes them, promiſes ſpiritual bleſſings and ſalvation to them, on condition of the parents faithfulneſs in devoting them to God, and bringing them up for him, perſevering in the exerciſes and duties, which are implied in this. And theſe exerciſes and duties, reſpecting their children, are profeſſed and promiſed by the parents, when they devote them to God, in this covenant tranſaction, and in applying the ſeal of the covenant to them. But there is no promiſe in this covenant, that if they do, with a degree of ſincerity, give up their children to God, and profeſs all thoſe exerciſes, and promiſe to perform all that duty towards them, which are implied in bringing them up for God, that they ſhall certainly do all this; but they may be very deficient and unfaithful in this covenant, as it reſpects their children, and bring a curſe upon them, rather than the bleſſings promiſed in the covenant.

Therefore,

Therefore, though the parents may be true believers, and intereſted in all the bleſſings of the covenant, ſo far as they reſpect themſelves, in their own perſons; yet they may be ſo negligent of the exerciſes and duties of the covenant, as it reſpects their children, and which they have promiſed; and by this ſo break the covenant, with reſpect to them, as to cut them off from the promiſed bleſſings of the covenant. Though the parents of children may, in one inſtance or more, be faithful in performing their promiſed duty to their children, and their children be made partakers of ſpiritual bleſſings, in conſequence of it; yet theſe children, though true believers, and intereſted in the bleſſings of the covenant themſelves, may ſo neglect their duty to *their* children, as not to keep covenant, as it reſpects them; and conſequently their children be deprived of the bleſſings of the covenant; and ſo the covenant, and the ſucceſſion of bleſſings, from parents to children, be broken and ceaſe.

Though Abraham was faithful in this covenant, and fulfilled the duties of it, as it reſpected his children; yet Iſaac or Jacob, or both, though good men, and intereſted in the promiſes of the covenant in their own perſons, might be ſo negligent and unfaithful, in their duty to *their* children, or ſome of them, at leaſt, as to cut them off from the promiſes of the covenant, as it reſpected them. Eli appears to have been a good man; yet he was ſo negligent of his duty to his ſons, that by this, evil came upon them. And king David, who was in many reſpects an eminently holy man, appears, from the hiſtory we have of him, and his family, to be very unfaithful in his duty to many of his children; and indulged a partiality in their favour, and a parental fondneſs, which was inconſiſtent with his treating them as he ought to have done; and led him far aſtray from his duty to them. Even his marrying ſo many wives, was inconſiſtent

ſiſtent with the regard he ought to have had for his poſterity, and tended to prevent his doing his duty to his children. The Prophet Malachi, ſpeaking againſt polygamy, refers to the original inſtitution of marriage by God, who made only one woman for one man, and ſays, "And did he not make ONE? Yet had he the reſidue of the ſpirit. And wherefore ONE? That he might ſeek a GODLY ſeed."* It appears from theſe words, that in the inſtitution of marriage, God had regard to the good of children and poſterity, that they might be a holy ſeed: And that if the duties of this relation, particularly as they reſpect their offspring, be properly and faithfully attended to, and performed, their children will be holy, inherit the bleſſings of the covenant, and be ſaved. It alſo appears, that polygamy is contrary to the good of poſterity, and has a ſtrong tendency to produce an ungodly ſeed; as it is unfriendly to the duties which parents owe to their children, and in many reſpects inconſiſtent with them.

It is to be obſerved, and muſt be kept in mind, that what has been ſaid on the Abrahamic covenant, and the circumciſing his children; the profeſſion, promiſe and duties implied in this, and what depended upon theſe, with regard to the children, is equally applicable to parents, and their ſeed, and to the baptiſm of their children, under the chriſtian diſpenſation.

All that has been obſerved, concerning the covenant made with Abraham and his ſeed, may be yet farther illuſtrated, and made more evident, by attending to the following words of God, concerning Abraham, and his children and houſehold. "For I know him, that he will command his children, and his houſehold after him, and they ſhall keep the way of the Lord, to do juſtice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath ſpoken of him."†

Firſt,

* Mal. ii. 15. † Gen. xviii. 19.

Firſt. We may obſerve what is here ſaid of Abraham, which God knew he would do. He knew he would do it, becauſe he had determined to work in him to will and to do it; for Abraham was wholly dependent on God for this, as for every thing elſe. "I know him, *that he will command his children, and houſehold after him.*"—This implies the whole of the duty which he engaged towards his children, and houſehold, in the covenant of circumciſion; and when he circumciſed his children; and by doing this, he kept the covenant, as it reſpected them. *Commanding them after him*, implies proper and careful inſtruction of them, in the way of the Lord, teaching them the great doctrines of religion, what the way of the Lord is, what true religion is; and what are the revealed commands of God, and what duties they muſt do; for the exerciſe of authority and commands, without ſuch inſtruction, would be improper, unreaſonable, without a meaning, and abſurd. This branch of duty cannot be done, without conſtant ſtudy, and great care and pains, watching every opportunity for it, and repeating it without ceſſation, which cannot be done without a good degree of religious knowledge, and great aſſiduity, concern and zeal. This part of the duty of parents to their children, is particularly and repeatedly inculcated by God, on the parents in Iſrael. "Theſe words which I command thee this day, ſhall be in thine heart. And thou ſhalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and ſhalt talk of them when thou ſitteſt in thine houſe, and when thou walkeſt by the way, and when thou lieſt down, and when thou riſeſt up."* And again, "Therefore, ye ſhall lay up theſe my words in your heart, and in your ſoul. And ye ſhall teach them your children, ſpeaking of them, when thou ſitteſt in thine houſe, and when thou walkeſt by the way, and when thou lieſt down, and when thou riſeſt up. That your

* Deut. vi. 6, 7.

your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the Lord ſware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon earth."*

Parental government, is alſo implied in theſe words. Without a proper and wiſe government of children, they cannot be properly and with ſucceſs inſtructed. They muſt teach, in this ſenſe, *with all authority*. Children who are diſobedient to their parents, which is always the caſe, where there is no proper government, cannot be inſtructed by them. Therefore, a proper, ſteady, wiſe government of children, in the exerciſe of parental authority, is eſſential to their good education; and parents muſt *command their children after them*, if they would bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The importance and neceſſity of family government, for the good of children, and of the church, are exhibited in a ſtriking light, by the law which God gave to Iſrael, which ordered that no ungoverned, diſobedient child, ſhould live there; but that every one of this character, ſhould be put to death; and the parents were commanded to ſee it executed, upon every child who would not ſubmit to their government, and obey their commands.†

This branch of the education of children, which is ſo important and eſſential, cannot be properly and faithfully executed, without great and conſtant care, circumſpection, prudence, and reſolution; continually watching over their children, and treating and governing them, in a manner beſt ſuited to anſwer the end of government, and lead them both to fear and love their parents.

Theſe words alſo neceſſarily imply, that Abraham did *pray* conſtantly and with earneſtneſs and importunity for his children, that God would indeed bleſs them, and render his endeavours ſucceſsful, ſo as to form them to true piety, and ſecure their ſalvation. And alſo that he might

* Chap. xi. 18, 19, 21. † Deut. xxi. 18—21.

might be faithful and wiſe in attending upon, and executing the important charge, reſpecting his children. A pious believer, who feels towards his children in any good meaſure, as he ought to do, and acts up to his character and obligations, in the religious education of his children, muſt thus pray for himſelf, with regard to his duty to them, and for them. He feels the infinite importance of their having the bleſſing of God, and of their ſalvation; that all their intereſt lies here; and he is a thouſand times more concerned about this, and deſirous of it, than of any temporal, worldly intereſt, whatſoever.* He knows his obligations, and the vows he has ſolemnly taken upon himſelf; and is ſenſible of his dependence on God, for wiſdom and fidelity in the performance of what is juſtly expected of him; and that God only can bleſs the means he uſes, and grant ſalvation to his children: A weighty ſenſe of all this will bring him on his knees, in humble, conſtant, earneſt application to God by prayer, for aſſiſtance and ſucceſs, in this moſt important and intereſting matter. To neglect ſuch prayer, is groſsly to neglect his duty to his children; and does imply a neglect of the other branches of their religious education, implied in commanding them after him. Therefore, when God ſaid he knew Abraham, that he would command his children and his houſehold after him, it is implied that he knew he would pray for himſelf, that he might faithfully do this; and for his children, that they might have the bleſſing of God, and be ſaved.

Theſe

* It is to be obſerved, that theſe are the views, feelings, and conduct of parents, who come up to what might be juſtly expected of them.—But this is not true of every pious parent. Such may be very unſteady in their views and feelings with reſpect to their children, and come vaſtly ſhort of their duty in their conduct; and ſay and do many things which have a contrary and bad influence on their children, and be very offenſive to God, and a groſs violation of their obligations and vows.

These words also imply the good example that Abraham would set before his children, and his household, of piety and righteousness. He would command them *after him*. He would set them an example of that religion, in which he educated them, and instruct and command them to follow him. This is essential in the proper and religious education of children. The parent who is not exemplary in his conduct, and does not set before his children an example of piety, righteousness, and benevolence, cannot give them a religious education. If he attempt to instruct, direct, and command them in the ways of religion, he will, in their sight, be guilty of gross contradictions; and will appear to them, not to be sincere and in earnest; and his bad example, or want of a good one, will counteract and defeat, all his attempts to instruct, exhort, and govern them, and will have more influence to corrupt them, than any thing he may say, or do, in favour of religion, can have to form them to piety and righteousness, if he should say or do any thing of this kind: But even this is not to be expected of such a parent. They who do not love religion, and practise it themselves, will not take any proper methods, and exert themselves suitably, to make their children truly religious.

This branch of duty, requires great and constant care, watchfulness and circumspection; that the whole of their conversation and conduct, may be as becometh godliness, and recommend religion to all with whom they live and converse; setting a calm, steady, dispassionate example of humility, uprightness, sincerity, truth, justice, benevolence, and mercy. Expressing their piety in all proper ways, and on every suitable occasion; and practising religion and devotion in their families, and in a constant attendance on all divine institutions.

Abraham was under obligation to do all this. He professed to have a heart to do it, and promised to do

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all this duty to his children and houſehold, when he circumciſed them. And God, who knew all things, and on whom Abraham wholly depended for grace and aſſiſtance, to perform this difficult and important branch of duty, determined to work in him to will and to do it; and therefore knew that he would be faithful in keeping covenant, and not neglect to do it. And chriſtian parents, who bring their children to baptiſm, profeſs, and engage all this duty in their treatment of them. And their obligations are increaſed, and are much greater, and more extenſive, than thoſe under which Abraham was; and they are bound to greater attention, concern and zeal, and to do much more in inſtructing and educating their children, than he was, as they have much greater light and advantages, than he had. The future ſtate being much more clearly brought into view now, than it was then; and conſequently, the importance that children ſhould be religious and be ſaved, ought to be more ſtrongly impreſſed on the minds of parents, and animate them to greater concern and zeal in this matter. And as they enjoy ſo much more light, they are under greater advantages to underſtand the great truths of religion, and to teach them to their children, and conſtantly inculcate them, both by words and example, their duty is enlarged, and their obligations to faithfulneſs, in the performance of it, greatly increaſed; and every neglect of duty toward their children, is much more criminal, than ſuch neglect would have been, in the father of the faithful.

Secondly. In theſe words, is declared the conſequence of Abraham's faithfulneſs in his duty to his children, in their education; and the certain connection of the former with the latter. "And they ſhall keep the way of the Lord, to do juſtice and judgment." This is to be truly pious and holy, and to go in the way which leads to eternal ſalvation. Here then is a declared and promiſ-

ed connection between Abraham's being faithful and thorough in the covenant of circumciſion, as it reſpected his children, and their holineſs and ſalvation, the latter following as a certain and promiſed conſequence of the former. This explains the covenant mentioned in the ſeventeenth chapter, which God made with Abraham and his ſeed, in which he promiſes to be a God to him and his ſeed after him; and confirms what has been obſerved above, concerning this covenant, as agreeable to the truth, viz. That in this covenant, God promiſed ſpiritual bleſſings, and ſalvation to the children of Abraham, upon condition of his faithfully performing what he profeſſed and engaged to do, with reſpect to them, when they were circumciſed by him; and that on this ground, they were denominated a holy ſeed, and to be numbered among the ſaved.*

And as this covenant with Abraham, including his ſeed with him, was the covenant of grace, which, as to ſubſtance, is the ſame into which God enters with all believers and their children, and is a pattern and example, of God's entering into covenant with believers in all ages, taking in their children with them, which all hold, who believe in the baptiſm of the children of believers; then why does not, why *muſt not*, this ſame covenant, contain the ſame promiſe to believers, of the holineſs and ſalvation of their children, upon the ſame condition to be performed by them, through all ages, to the end of the world? If this covenant made with Abraham, including his ſeed with him, has been now rightly explained, agreeable

* It has been ſuppoſed by ſome, that Iſhmael, Abraham's ſon, was not a good man; but none ought to think ſo, unleſs there were clear poſitive evidence of it, which it is believed there is not. This ſuppoſition is inconſiſtent with the expreſs declaration of God, in the words which have been conſidered. viz. That the children of Abraham ſhould keep the way of the Lord, to do juſtice and judgment. It is ſaid of him, when he died, "He was gathered unto his people." This is ſaid of the good; but of no wicked man.

agreeable to the plain meaning of it, the conſequence will certainly follow. And that the true ſenſe and meaning of the mutual promiſes between God and Abraham, with reſpect to his ſeed, has been given; and conſequently, that the ſeed of believers have the promiſe of holineſs and ſalvation, upon the parents being faithful in keeping covenant, as it reſpects their children, will appear yet more evident, from other paſſages of ſcripture, which are now to be conſidered.

Thoſe words of God, which have been mentioned, "Shewing mercy unto thouſands of them that love me, and keep my commandments," compared with the words of Moſes, which have reference to theſe, "Know therefore, that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, and keep his commandments, to a thouſand generations,"* ſerve to explain the covenant made with Abraham, and his ſeed, and to confirm the ſenſe which has now been given of it.

It has been ſhewn, that theſe words in the decalogue, contain a promiſe to parents who love God and keep his commandments, of mercy to their children; and that this mercy ſhewn to their children, in conſequence of the parents keeping the commandments of God, reſpects their moral character, which implies true piety, and final ſalvation: And that the courſe of this mercy, deſcending down to poſterity, cannot be interrupted, unleſs the parents are unfaithful in keeping covenant. It has alſo been ſhewn, that keeping the commandments of God, includes their duty to their children, in devoting them to God and bringing them up for God. And what is implied in this has been particularly explained, and needs not to be repeated. It has been alſo ſhewn, that godly parents, who have a degree of true love to God,

* Exod. xx. 6. Deut. vii. 9.

may groſsly fail of keeping his commandments, as they reſpect their children; and ſo break the covenant between God and them, ſo far as it regards their poſterity, and fail of having any ſhare in the promiſe of mercy to them. But thoſe who do not greatly fail of their duty, in this reſpect, but are faithful in the covenant, have the promiſe of mercy to their children, and are the happy inſtruments of conveying holineſs and ſalvation to them, and no farther; but if their children be alſo faithful, they hereby hand down ſpiritual bleſſings to their children; and ſo on to a thouſand generations; and the ſucceſſion cannot be interrupted, but by breach of covenant, by ſome of the parents. Theſe words, therefore, thus explained and underſtood,* (and it is believed that no other conſiſtent ſenſe can be put upon them) do confirm what has been ſaid of the covenant made with Abraham, and his ſeed, and with all believers and their children, to the end of the world; and prove that the convenant of grace and mercy contains a promiſe of mercy and ſalvation to the children of parents who faithfully keep the covenant and commands of God, as they reſpect their children.

And in this view, the natural and eaſy ſenſe of thoſe words of the Apoſtle Peter, which have been the ſubject of ſo much altercation, offers itſelf, as another proof of the point under conſideration. The words are, "Then Peter ſaid unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, for the remiſſion of ſins, and ye ſhall receive the gift of the Holy Ghoſt. *For the promiſe is unto you, and to your children.*"†

The covenant with Abraham, contained a promiſe to him and his children, which is denoted by *the promiſe*. And as the Apoſtle is ſpeaking to the Jews, they would naturally

* See page 309, &c. † Acts ii. 38, 39.

naturally underſtand this covenant by *the promiſe*, and that theſe words of Peter imported, that this covenant was ſtill in force, and was not curtailed or altered in this reſpect: And though now baptiſm was the token and ſeal of the covenant, inſtead of circumciſion, yet ſtill it contained the promiſe of ſaving mercy to every penitent believer, and to his children; as did the covenant of circumciſion, made with Abraham their father. It was natural, and of importance, when he ſpoke to the Jews of baptiſm, and exhorted them to ſubmit to it, to explain to them the covenant and the promiſe, of which baptiſm was the ſeal, and to mention the nature and extent of it; and to ſhow that it reached their children as well as themſelves, and included them as much as their parents, as did the covenant with Abraham and their fathers, the covenant of circumciſion.

The Pedobaptiſts have generally underſtood theſe words in the ſenſe which has now been given, and conſidered them as a ſtrong and concluſive argument for the baptiſm of the children of believers, as included in the covenant of which baptiſm is the ſeal, and intereſted in the promiſe; though they have not agreed in the meaning and extent of the promiſe made to the children of believing parents; nor in explaining the condition on which the promiſe is made. It is for them now to conſider and judge, whether the true meaning of theſe words has not been ſtated above, according to the ſcripture; and whether any other conſiſtent meaning in favour of infant baptiſm, and agreeable to the paſſages of ſcripture which have been conſidered under this head, can be thought of, and ſupported.

The following words of Solomon, connect the wiſe, faithful, and pious education of children, with their piety and ſalvation; and amount to a promiſe, that the latter ſhall be the conſequence of the former. "Train up a

child in the way he ſhould go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it."* Theſe words aſſert the ſame thing which God ſays of Abraham and his children, which has been conſidered, "He will command his children, and his houſehold after him; and they ſhall keep the way of the Lord, to do juſtice and judgment." And they coincide with all that has been ſaid on this point; and ſerve to ſtrengthen the evidence, that parents have a promiſe in the covenant of grace, that upon their faithfulneſs in keeping covenant, as it reſpects their children, they ſhall go in the way to heaven.

What he ſays elſewhere, concerning the education of children, may be conſidered in the ſame light. "Fooliſhneſs is bound up in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction ſhall drive it far from him. Withhold not correction from the child: For if thou beateſt him with the rod, he ſhall not die. Thou ſhalt beat him with the rod, and ſhalt deliver his ſoul from hell. Correct thy ſon, and he ſhall give thee reſt: Yea, he ſhall give delight unto thy ſoul."† *Correcting* a child, *the rod of correction, and beating him with a rod*, intends the whole of a wiſe and faithful education of children, as a proper government of them is an eſſential part of ſuch education, and cannot be properly and thoroughly, and with ſucceſs, maintained and practiſed, where the other parts of education are neglected. To ſuch proper and wiſe government, and the faithful, painful, religious education implied in it, are connected the wiſdom, piety and ſalvation of the children, and repeatedly promiſed in thoſe words. It will drive fooliſhneſs far from them. Conſequently they will be wiſe, which implies true piety. They ſhall not die, but their ſouls ſhall be delivered from hell: Therefore ſhall be ſaved. They ſhall give reſt and delight to the pious parent, which they cannot do, unleſs they are wiſe and holy. There

* Prov. xxii. 6. † Prov. xxii. 15. xxiii. 13, 14. xxix. 17.

There are many other paſſages of ſcripture which coincide with the idea of the covenant of grace, which has been now given; and ſerve to ſtrengthen the evidence which has already been produced from the ſcripture, that it contains promiſes of ſaving good to the children of thoſe who keep covenant, as it reſpects their offspring. Several of theſe have been mentioned, which contain declarations and promiſes of bleſſings to the children of thoſe who love God, and keep his commandments; and that this ſhall take place, eſpecially in the millennium, when parents ſhall in general be more faithful in keeping covenant. There are others of the ſame tenor, ſuch as the following, "I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlaſting covenant with them. And their ſeed ſhall be known among the Gentiles, and their offſpring among the people: All that ſee them ſhall acknowledge them, that they are the ſeed which the Lord hath bleſſed. They ſhall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble: For they are the ſeed of the bleſſed of the Lord, and their offſpring with them."* "He eſtabliſhed a teſtimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Iſrael, which he commanded our fathers, that they ſhould make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which ſhould be born; who ſhould ariſe and declare them to their children; that they might ſet their hope in God, and not forget the works of God; but keep his commandments."† In theſe words, it is repreſented, that according to the covenant and appointment of God, piety was to be handed down from parents to children, by the care and fidelity of the former, in educating and inſtructing the latter. The following paſſage has reference to the words in the decalogue, which have been conſidered, and confirm the meaning which has been given of them.

* Iſaiah lxi. 8, 9. lxv. 23. † Pſal. lxxviii. 5, 6, 7.

"The mercy of the Lord is from everlaſting to everlaſting, upon them that fear him; and his righteouſneſs unto childrens children, to ſuch as keep his covenant, and to thoſe who remember his commandments, to do them."*

When the prophet Malachi foretells the introduction of the goſpel diſpenſation, and of John the Baptiſt, the meſſenger who ſhould prepare the way before Chriſt, and the effect and conſequence of all this, he comprehends the whole in the following words, with which the Old Teſtament concludes. "And he ſhall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, leſt I come and ſmite the earth with a curſe."† Theſe words do not only expreſs the effect of the preaching of John, while he was on the ſtage of life; but the nature and effect of the chriſtian diſpenſation which he ſhould introduce, ſo far as it ſhould take place. This effect took place, in ſome degree, in the days of John, and his preaching tended to promote it: And this is the natural tendency of chriſtianity; it had this effect in the days of the Apoſtles to a greater degree than in the days of John. And ſo far as chriſtianity has been underſtood, and the true ſpirit of it has been imbibed, in any age and nation ſince that time to this day, it has tended to turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers. But when true religion ſhall flouriſh, and take place univerſally, to a greater degree than ever it has yet done, this prediction will be accompliſhed in a much higher degree, and more apparently, than ever before; to which the miniſtry of John, and all that has taken place ſince, may properly be conſidered as an introduction; and to which thoſe words therefore, have a principal reference; and the chief accompliſhment of them, will be in that day, which is yet to come.

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* Pſal. ciii. 17, 18. † Mal. iv. 6.

By the heart of the fathers being turned unto the children, is not meant the exerciſe and increaſe of what is called natural affection; for this is found in a ſufficient degree, in almoſt all parents, at all times; and if it were increaſed, it would not alter their moral character, or anſwer any good end. It muſt therefore intend the exerciſe of a religious, pious affection towards them, leading them to a proper and great concern for their ſalvation, and a zeal and engagedneſs to do their duty faithfully, and in all reſpects, as it concerns their children, and which has a tendency to promote their holineſs and ſalvation, and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord: Senſible of their covenant engagements to do this, and of the ſtrong motives and great encouragement God has ſet before them, to be faithful and laborious in this, by the gracious promiſe he has given them.

The heart of the children is turned to their parents, when they are diſpoſed to obey them in the Lord, and grow up in the exerciſe of piety and righteouſneſs, or keep the way of the Lord, to do juſtice and judgment; following and imitating their parents in this, as the children of Abraham did. When they hearken to their pious fathers, ſaying, "My ſon, receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; ſo that thou incline thine ear unto wiſdom, and apply thine heart to underſtanding. My ſon, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes obſerve my ways."* Then the heart of the children will be turned to the fathers.

It is to be obſerved here, that the turning of the heart of the children to their parents, is in conſequence of the heart of the fathers being turned unto the children, as being connected with it. This is agreeable to thoſe ſcriptures which have been conſidered, as they have been explained;

* Prov. ii. 1, 2. xxiii. 26.

explained; ſhewing that there is a conſtituted or promiſed connection between parents keeping covenant, and doing the duty towards their children, which they have promiſed, which is expreſſed by their heart being turned towards them; and the piety and ſalvation of the children, which is neceſſarily implied in their heart being turned toward their parents, hearkening to them, and obeying them in the Lord, in all things.

It is here repreſented, that this ſhall take place under the goſpel diſpenſation, which John the Baptiſt ſhould introduce, in a higher degree than it had done before; and chriſtianity, and true religion, ſhould be propagated in this way, and handed down from parents to children; and that this ſhall take place, eſpecially in the millennium, of which time the prophet ſpeaks particularly, in the preceding part of this chapter; when chriſtianity ſhall have its proper and genuine effect, to a much greater degree, than ever before; and which will, therefore, be, in the higheſt ſenſe, the goſpel day, the day of ſalvation; when the heart of fathers will be turned unto their children, in the ſenſe above explained, to a vaſtly higher degree than they ever were before, and conſequently the heart of children will be turned to their fathers, more univerſally, in the high exerciſe of piety, from their youth. And in this view, theſe words coincide with thoſe ſcriptures which have been mentioned, where God promiſes that he will then circumciſe the heart of parents and of their children, to love the Lord, &c. That he will pour his ſpirit upon the ſeed of his people, and his bleſſing upon their offſpring. That his church ſhall be eſtabliſhed in righteouſneſs, and all her children ſhall be taught of the Lord, and great ſhall be the peace of her children. And they ſhall ſpring up as among the graſs, as willows by the water courſes. "As for me, this is my covenant with them, ſaith the Lord; my ſpirit which is

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upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, ſhall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy ſeed, nor out of the mouth of thy ſeed's ſeed, ſaith the Lord, from henceforth, and forever. I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlaſting covenant with them. And their ſeed ſhall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: All that ſee them, ſhall acknowledge them, that they are the ſeed which the Lord hath bleſſed. They ſhall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the ſeed of the bleſſed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. And they ſhall be my people, and I will be their God. And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them. And I will make an everlaſting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they ſhall not depart from me."* — "Leſt I come and ſmite the earth with a curſe." By theſe words, it is repreſented, that the only way, according to divine conſtitution and appointment, to keep up true religion in the world, and tranſmit it down to the end of it, and ſo to prevent mankind becoming totally corrupt, ſo as to be deſtroyed by the curſe of God, as they once were by a flood, is to turn the heart of the fathers to their children, and the heart of the children to the fathers. And that this will take place, in an eminent degree, in the millennium, by which the everlaſting covenant will be maintained, and appear in its full force and operation; by which means, the curſe of God on mankind, by his terrible judgments, for their wickedneſs, in breaking the everlaſting covenant, renouncing it themſelves, and with reſpect to their children, not training them up for God, in the ways of true piety, but for the devil,

* Deut. xxx. 6. Iſai. xliv. 3, 4. liv. 13, 14. lix. 21. lxi. 8, 9. lxv. Jer. xxxii. 38, 39, 40.

devil, in the ways of ſin, ſhall have a ſtop put to it, and proceed no farther, as it otherwiſe muſt, and would, to the total extripation of mankind. Theſe words may perhaps receive ſome illuſtration by the following paſſage in Iſaiah, which has been mentioned. "The earth alſo is defiled under the inhabitants thereof: Becauſe they have tranſgreſſed the laws, changed the ordinance, *broken the everlaſting covenant; therefore hath the curſe devoured the earth*, and they that dwell therein are deſolate: Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left."* This chapter is a prophecy of the introduction of the millennium, and of the awful judgments on mankind, and eſpecially on corrupt, nominal chriſtians, previous to that, by which a great part of men ſhall be deſtroyed; as a teſtimony of the diſpleaſure of God with them, for their great wickedneſs, and not fearing God themſelves, nor educating their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, but the contrary; training them up in ſin, and the ſervice of ſatan; and thus tranſgreſſing the law, changing the ordinance of God, and breaking the everlaſting covenant, which if kept, would convey true religion down from generation to generation. But all mankind ſhall not be deſtroyed, becauſe the remaining few, compared with the whole, ſhall be truly pious, and their hearts ſhall be turned to their children, and the hearts of the children to them, and ſo a pious race ſhall be propagated and multiplied, and fill the world; "for God will then pour his ſpirit on them, and on their ſeed, and his bleſſing on their offſpring; and they ſhall ſpring up as among graſs, as willows by the water courſes." This is repreſented in the following words, in this ſame chapter. "When thus it ſhall be, in the midſt of the land, among the people, there ſhall be as the ſhaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning of grapes, when the vintage is done. They ſhall

* Iſai. xxiv. 5, 6.

ſhall lift up their voice, they ſhall ſing for the majeſty of the Lord, they ſhall cry aloud from the ſea."*

The reaſonableneſs and importance of ſuch a conſtitution and covenant between God and parents, with reſpect to their children; and the good ends this is ſuited to anſwer, will farther appear by the following obſervations; which will, at the ſame time ſerve to ſtrengthen the evidence, that the covenant of grace does contain a promiſe of ſaving good to the children of parents, who are faithful in keeping covenant, as it regards their offspring.

1. It appears from reaſon and the circumſtances of the caſe, and from fact and experience, that the good education of children is of great importance, and neceſſary for their good, and the good of ſociety.

Children are very much formed in their diſpoſition and manners by their education. If this be bad, or wholly, or in a great meaſure neglected; and they be not governed and inſtructed, and have not good examples ſet before them, but the contrary; the bad effects of this are generally ſeen in them, and they become injurious to ſociety, rather than a benefit. God has ſo conſtituted things, that if parents be wiſe and faithful in educating their children, they will have more influence on them, than any others can, and this has a great tendency, to form them to a good moral character and conduct. And the parents muſt have the firſt and chief hand in teaching them, and forming their minds, and regulating their conduct; as they are under the beſt advantages to do this; and if it be wholly neglected by them, other means and advantages are never like to reach them, ſo as to do them any great good, according to the ordinary courſe of things. It is certain, that no inſtruction from any other quarter, or any means that can be uſed with them, can have an equal tendency to their benefit; and if parents

* v. 13, 14.

parents neglect their duty to their children; other means uſed for their inſtruction and benefit, are commonly uſeleſs, and in vain to them.

It is known, from experience, that the character of children is not only often, but commonly formed for life, while they are in their minority, while they are under the care and education of their parents, or of others who are ſubſtituted in their room. And a foundation is generally laid then, if ever, for their piety and moral chriſtian character, ſo far as we can judge from appearance and facts.

2. Therefore, this branch of duty, the wiſe and faithful education of children, is much inſiſted upon, and often ſtrictly enjoined in ſcripture. This is frequently inculcated on the members of the church of Iſrael, as a very important part of their duty. "Only take heed to thy ſelf, and keep thy ſoul diligently, leſt thou forget the things which thine eyes have ſeen, and leſt they depart from thine heart all the days of thy life: *But teach them thy ſons, and thy ſons ſons.* Gather the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they ſhall live upon the earth, *and that they may teach them their children.* Theſe words, which I command thee this day, ſhall be in thine heart: And thou ſhalt *teach them diligently unto thy children*, and ſhall talk of them, when thou ſitteſt in thine houſe, and when thou walkeſt by the way, and when thou lieſt down, and when thou riſeſt up."* This is ſo important a command that it is repeated again.† "And ye ſhall teach them your children, ſpeaking of them when thou ſitteſt in thine houſe, and when thou walkeſt by the way, when thou lieſt down, and when thou riſeſt up."

It is again and again enjoined in the following words: "Gather the people together, men, and women, and children,

* Deut. iv. 9, 10. vii. 6. vi. 7. † Chap. xi. 19.

children, that they may hear, and that they may learn to fear the Lord your God, and obſerve to do all the words of this law. And that their children which have not known them, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God."* "Set your hearts unto all the words which I teſtify among you this day; which ye ſhall command your children to obſerve, to do all the words of this law: For it is not a vain thing for you; becauſe it is your life."† It was repeatedly enjoined upon parents to teach their children, the great works God had done for them, and the deliverances he had wrought for his people; and to explain to them the meaning of the religious rites, which were inſtituted by God, and the commands and ordinances which he had given them.‡

God ſpeaks of it as an excellent and important part of the character and conduct of Abraham, That he would command his children and his houſehold after him, to keep the way of the Lord, to do juſtice and judgment.§ The Pſalmiſt mentions the command of God to inſtruct and educate children, as an important article, and as neceſſary to tranſmit true knowledge and piety to poſterity. "He eſtabliſhed a teſtimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Iſrael, which he commanded our fathers, *that they ſhould make them known to their children*: That the generation to come, might know them, even the children which ſhould be born; who ſhould ariſe *and declare them to their children*, that they might ſet their hope in God, &c."‖

Solomon often ſpeaks of the importance and advantage of the faithful and wiſe education of children, and inculcates it as a duty. He ſays, "He that ſpareth his rod, hateth his ſon: But he that loveth him, chaſteneth him betimes. Chaſten thy ſon while there is hope, and let

* Chap. xxxi. 12, 13. † Chap. xxxii. 46, 47.
‡ Exod. x. 2. xii. 25, 26, 27. xiii. 14, 15. Deut. vi. 20—25.
§ Gen. xviii. 19. ‖ Pſal. lxxviii. 5, 6, 7.

let not thy ſoul ſpare for his crying. Train up a child in the way he ſhould go: And when he is old, he will not depart from it. Fooliſhneſs is bound up in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction ſhall drive it far from him. Withhold not correction from a child; for if thou beateſt him with a rod, he ſhall not die. Thou ſhalt beat him with the rod, and ſhalt deliver his ſoul from hell. The rod and reproof give wiſdom: But a child left to himſelf, bringeth his mother to ſhame. Correct thy ſon, and he ſhall give thee reſt: Yea, he ſhall give delight unto thy ſoul."* And the nine firſt chapters of the Proverbs of Solomon, are deſigned to expreſs the concern parents ought to have for the ſpiritual good of their children; and their conſtant attention to them in this view, watching over them, inſtructing, admoniſhing and warning them: and through the whole exhibit the importance and neceſſity of the childrens hearkening and obeying their parents, in order to their good; and the happy conſequence of this to them. And the awful conſequence of ſlighting and diſobeying parents is repeatedly mentioned in that book.

This is the firſt command in the ſecond table of the decalogue, "Honour thy father and thy mother." To which is annexed a promiſe of good: Which ſuppoſes the duty of parents to govern and inſtruct their children, and to exerciſe great and conſtant care in their education; and to conduct ſo, as to be worthy of love, reſpect, and honour from their children. And an awful curſe is denounced upon thoſe children who do not obey this command, "Curſed is he that ſetteth light by his father or mother."† And God made a law, which if obſerved, did effectually prevent any diſobedient children living in the congregation of Iſrael. For if parents had a diſobedient child, they were commanded to bring him forth

* Prov. xiii. 24. xix. 18. xxii. 6, 15. xxiii. 13, 14. xxix. 15, 17.
† Deut. xxvii. 16.

forth to the elders of the city, and witneſs againſt him, and he was put to death.* This law was ſuited to awaken, and keep alive, the feelings of pious parents towards their children, and excite a great concern, and unremitting care and exertion, early and conſtantly to govern them, and keep up their authority in the wiſeſt and beſt manner, ſuited to form them to love and obedience; and to inſtruct, admoniſh, and warn them; and educate them in the beſt manner which ſhall tend to promote their obedience, and true piety; having the awful event conſtantly in view, which might be the conſequence of their neglect, and would certainly take place, if their children ſhould grow up ungoverned and diſobedient.

And this law had a mighty tendency to impreſs the hearts of children with a ſenſe of the evil conſequence to them, of diſobedience to their parents; and to guard them againſt the leaſt degree of a diſpoſition to diſregard and ſlight them; and to excite them to a conſtant care, and reſolution to attend to the inſtructions, and admonitions of their parents, and ſtrictly obey all their exhortations and commands. In what an important and intereſting light does this law, and the other directions and precepts which have been mentioned under this head, ſet the wiſe and faithful education of children; and their obedience to the inſtructions and authority of their parents! It is ſuited powerfully to turn the heart of the fathers to the children; and the heart of children to the fathers.

And under the goſpel diſpenſation, the faithful and pious education of children, and their obedience to parents in all things, are ſtrictly enjoined. The command is, "Children obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Children obey your parents in all things; for this is well pleaſing unto the Lord. And ye fathers, provoke

* Deut. xxi. 18, 19, 20, 21.

provoke not your children to wrath: But bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."* And no man who had a family could be an officer in the church unleſs he was "One that ruled well his own houſe, having his children in ſubjection with all gravity," even faithful or believing children.†

3. Since the faithful, prudent, and religious education of children, is of ſuch vaſt importance, and ſo neceſſary for their good, and the good of the church, according to the natural courſe of things, which God has conſtituted; and ſince this is ſo ſtrictly enjoined upon the people of God, and ſo much inculcated in divine revelation; it may hence be inferred, that God has ſet before parents the ſtrongeſt motives, and the greateſt encouragements to be faithful and laborious in their duty to their children, and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and which will have the greateſt tendency to animate them to engagedneſs and perſeverance in this difficult work, in which they will meet with much oppoſition. and many diſcouragements, from themſelves, the world, ſatan, and their children. This may be reaſonably expected, eſpecially in the covenant of *grace*, or that *gracious* covenant which God makes with believers, as it reſpects their children, and their duty to them: For the greater the bleſſings are, which are promiſed to their offspring; and the greater the motives and encouragements are to do the duty enjoined, or perform the condition on which the bleſſings are ſuſpended, the more grace is contained and exhibited in the covenant.

4. A promiſe that the children ſhall be bleſſed with ſpiritual bleſſings and ſalvation, on the parents faithfulneſs to them, and bringing them up for God, affords the ſtrongeſt motive, and gives the greateſt encouragement to pious parents, to be faithful and perform the condition of the covenant, as it reſpects their children, that can be thought

* Eph. vi. 1, 4. Col. iii. 20. † 1 Tim. iii. 4. Tit. i. 6.

thought of as poſſible; and renders the covenant, in this reſpect, in the higheſt degree a covenant of grace.

If pious parents felt as they ought, and had exerciſes which might be reaſonably expected towards their children, their greateſt concern would be that they may be ſanctified and ſaved. This they would deſire for them unſpeakably above all other things. To have them live and die in ſin, is to ſuch parents, infinitely dreadful. They had much rather have no offspring, than to bring forth children for ſuch a death, even eternal deſtruction. If their children may not be holy and ſaved, they have nothing to aſk or deſire for them; their exiſtence, and all they can have and enjoy, is, on the whole, worſe than nothing; infinitely worſe! Therefore, that they may be holy and ſaved, is the great object of their deſires and prayers. And what can be more agreeable and pleaſing to ſuch parents, than for God to take their children into covenant with them, and to ſay, "If you will be faithful to your children, and treat them as becomes pious parents, and bring them up for me, I will be their God, and they ſhall be holy and happy forever: Therefore, let all your concern for the good and ſalvation of your children, excite and animate you to proper exerciſes and faithfulneſs, with reſpect to them; for they are committed to you, to bring them up for me; and if you will do this faithfully, they ſhall be bleſſed, and ſaved?" What chriſtian parent is there, whoſe views and feelings are in any good meaſure anſwerable to his character, who would not admire the condeſcenſion and grace of ſuch a promiſe; and rejoice to enter into ſuch a covenant, and promiſe, through Chriſt's ſtrengthening him to perform the condition of the covenant, and give up his children to Chriſt, and have the ſeal of the covenant put upon them?

And upon this ground, the children of believers are holy, and numbered among the ſaints and the ſaved.

Holineſs and ſalvation are ſecured to them, by divine promiſe, on condition, the parents are faithful in the covenant, which they ſolemnly profeſs and engage to be. The church, relying on their profeſſion and engagements, that they will be faithful and keep the covenant, as it reſpects their children, conſider them, receive and look upon them, as holy, and thoſe who ſhall be ſaved; ſo they are as viſibly holy, or as really holy in their view, as their parents are.

BUT here ſeveral queſtions, which may be ſuggeſted, from what has been ſaid, on this point, muſt be anſwered.

QUESTION I. Is not this doctrine, that the covenant of grace contains a promiſe of the holineſs and ſalvation of the children of parents, who are faithful in their duty to them, and in educating them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, contrary to known fact and experience, in that ſo many children of pious parents, appear as deſtitute of holineſs as other children, and are of a contrary character, when they are capable of diſcovering their diſpoſition by their conduct; and many of them appear to live and die ſo: And there are many known inſtances of children, whoſe parents appear to be eminently pious, and careful to educate their children well, who yet appear to have no piety, but are openly and notoriouſly vicious, and appear to live and die ſo? And how can all the children of profeſſors of religion, who enter into covenant with God, be conſidered, as really holy, or how can it be expected that they will grow up pious children, and be ſaved, when this does not appear to be true in fact, in ſo many inſtances; but the contrary?

ANSWER 1ſt. It does appear from fact, that the education of children, if in any good meaſure practiſed, and

and ſo far as it has taken place, has a great influence on children in general; and many of them who have had any degree of a pious education, do themſelves become profeſſors of religion, and appear to be holy. How much greater and more univerſal might be the good effect of ſuch education, if parents were more faithful and thorough in this branch of their duty, than they generally are, even as diligent and faithful, as might reaſonably be expected, conſidering the importance of the caſe, and the motives and encouragements they have?

This leads to

ANSWER 2d. Parents who have been profeſſors of religion, and have entered into covenant with God, have been, in general, groſsly negligent of their duty to their children, and have lived in the conſtant violation of the covenant, as it reſpects their children. This will appear to every one, who will conſider what is implied in bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, as it has been briefly ſtated above; and judge what might reaſonably be required and expected of parents, in this important and intereſting matter: And at the ſame time, will, in the light of this, obſerve how the children, even of the profeſſors of religion, are in general educated. He will be ſenſible there is but little wiſe and prudent government, ſteadily and perſeveringly maintained from the early days, in which children are capable of diſcipline and government, until they ceaſe to be minors: And that much of the contrary, generally takes place, which is ſuited to weaken all parental authority, and tends to ruin the children. He will find few inſtances, if any, of that careful, wiſe and conſtant inſtruction, aſſiduouſly endeavouring to inſtil into their young minds, the principles of true knowledge and wiſdom, and watching over them, to guard them from wrong notions, errors and deluſions, in things of religion,

which are moſt reaſonable and important, and which we find ſo ſtrictly enjoined in the Bible. And what bad examples, of evil ſpeaking, and backbiting, of vain, trifling converſation; of paſſion; of covetouſneſs, and worldlineſs; of great indifference, and neglects reſpecting the exerciſes and practice of piety, in reading and ſtudying the Bible, and the worſhip of God, are to be found among profeſſors in general, which have a great and deſtructive influence on the minds of children? And how few are there who are not greatly deficient in the example they ſet before their children, which could not take place, were they not groſsly negligent in their duty to them, and had they a reaſonable and proper concern for their good? How little is done or ſaid by parents, in general, which is ſuited to excite and maintain a proper and faithful education of children, in all the parts of it? How little do they appear to regard or underſtand their covenant engagements, or the nature of the covenant into which they have entered, and the encouragements and promiſes made to faithfulneſs in keeping covenant; and the infinite importance of this to their children? And the churches take no care in this matter, to watch over one another, with reſpect to the education of their children; and to warn and exhort, and aſſiſt each other to do their duty in this reſpect; which is certainly a great neglect.

When theſe things are properly conſidered, the general want of piety, and the too common irreligion and vice, which are found among the children of profeſſors of religion, may be accounted for, conſiſtent with their being a promiſe in the covenant of grace, that the children of parents who faithfully perform the duties of the covenant towards them, ſhall be holy, and ſhare in the great ſalvation; and does not afford the leaſt ſhadow of an argument that there is no ſuch promiſe.

True

True religion has generally been in ſo low a degree in the church, and ſtill is, and there have been ſo many members of it wholly ſtrangers to a life of godlineſs, not being true believers, that the life and power of chriſtianity has not had the proper influence and been acted out by profeſſors in general, as it ought to be, and might be reaſonably expected.

Moſt real chriſtians have been, and now are, ſhamefully deficient, as to the ſtrength and conſtancy of their religious exerciſes, and in every branch of duty; and their diſcerning and knowledge in the doctrines and duties of chriſtianity, has been in ſo ſmall a degree, that when, conſidering the time and advantages they have had, they ought to be teachers, eſpecially of their children, they in general, need themſelves to be taught the firſt principles of the oracles of God. And the nature and extent of the covenant of grace, as it reſpects the children of believers; and the deſign and meaning of the inſtitution of baptiſm of ſuch children, and what is implied in it, have not been generally underſtood: And the duty which parents engage to do towards their children, has been greatly overlooked and diſregarded, even in theory, as well as practice: And the promiſe of the ſucceſs of faithfulneſs in this duty, in the holineſs and ſalvation of their children, has not been believed by the moſt, and they are now diſpoſed to oppoſe this ſentiment; and ſo cannot feel the motives and great encouragement this affords, and ſets before parents, to care and faithfulneſs in this branch of duty; nor the vaſt importance of it, to them and their children.

It is therefore no matter of wonder, that the children of profeſſors in general, and of really pious parents, have not received the bleſſings of the covenant of grace, as the duties of the covenant have been ſo groſsly neglected by almoſt all; and they have not ſo much as believed

that there is any ſuch covenant between God and themſelves, reſpecting their children. This is what might be reaſonably expected, as things have gone, and ſtill take place, with regard to children, in the great neglect of that duty, to which the promiſe of ſucceſs is made.—Which branch of duty has doubtleſs been more neglected by real chriſtian parents, than other branches of chriſtianity; not only becauſe it has been leſs underſtood, and inculcated, and the motives and encouragement to faithfulneſs in it, have been kept out of ſight, or at moſt, been leſs in view: But becauſe there are peculiar difficulties and temptations in the way of a wiſe and faithful diſcharge of this duty; and ſatan, who knows how much depends upon the parents faithfulneſs, and what advantages he gains, againſt children, and the church, and the intereſt of religion in general, by the groſs neglect of this branch of duty, exerts all his cunning and power, and improves every advantage he has, to lay ſnares and ſtumbling blocks in the way of their duty; and in magnifying the difficulties and diſcouragements, to deter them from it; offering every temptation he can, to neglect it, and to do that which has a contrary, and moſt fatal tendency, even to ruin their children. Nor is there any certainty that this influence of the devil will ceaſe, or that the power of godlineſs will ſo take place in general, as to lead parents to be faithful in their duty to their children; and to keep covenant, ſo that the bleſſings of it ſhall deſcend from father to ſon, through many generations, until ſatan ſhall be bound, and caſt into the bottomleſs pit, and ſhut up there a thouſand years, that he may deceive men no more, during all that time: And when chriſtianity ſhall have its proper and full effect, by the effuſions of the Holy Spirit, in greater degrees than before; forming chriſtians to eminent degrees of holineſs, and true zeal and engagedneſs to do their duty in all the

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branches of it; eſpecially that which they owe to their children, which is now ſo much and ſo generally neglected. Then the heart of the fathers will be turned to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, as they never were before; and the covenant of grace, which contains promiſes to parents and their children, will take place in the full extent of it, and the happy conſequences of it be ſeen and enjoyed.

Such a time, is abundantly ſpoken of and predicted in the ſcripture. And all that takes place previous to that day, is preparatory to it. That is the time of ſalvation, in the higheſt ſenſe, when the doctrines and inſtitutions of the goſpel will be better underſtood, than ever before, and have their proper and full effect. The Bible itſelf has principal reference to that time, and will be then underſtood, prized and improved more and better, than ever before. The inſtitutions and ordinances of Chriſt, have been and now are, greatly miſunderſtood, perverted and abuſed, by moſt chriſtian churches, and profeſſors of religion, and great irregularities take place in attendance on them. The time preceding the millennium, may be compared to the winter, when things appear in great diſorder and confuſion, and the influences of the ſun are weak and ſmall, and have little effect; but all is preparatory to the ſpring and ſummer, when the ſun and rain will have their proper effect, in producing the fruits of the earth.

Theſe obſervations are made to ſhow, that we cannot judge of the good effect, of the proper, pious, and faithful education of children, and of the extent of the promiſes of the covenant of grace, and of the deſign and meaning of the baptiſm of the children of believers, by what has already taken place in the chriſtian church: But we muſt learn this from the Bible; and not expect that the proper and happy effect of this inſtitution will take place

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in any great degree, until the ſpirit and power of chriſtianity ſhall be more felt, and exerted in practice, which will introduce the millennium. Then parents, with their hearts full of love to Chriſt, and in a ſenſe of the infinite importance of the ſalvation of their children, and ardently deſiring to be the happy inſtruments of it, will give them up to Chriſt in baptiſm, rejoicing in this ſeal of the divine promiſe to bleſs them, on their acting a conſiſtent and faithful part towards them; and with a heart, admiring the grace of God in this covenant, and ſtrongly deſirous and diſpoſed to be faithful, they will lay hold of the covenant; and make it their great concern, and an important branch of their duty, to bring up their children for Chriſt. Then the happy effect of this will be ſeen in the early piety of the children, who will grow up in the fear of God, and walk in his ways, to the unſpeakable ſatisfaction and joy of the parents, and the comfort and edification of the church. Then, when a large congregation of chriſtians ſhall be aſſembled for public worſhip, all poſſeſſed with a realizing belief and ſenſe of the truth of the goſpel, and the great ſalvation, and their hearts glowing with fervent love to Chriſt, and to each other, what pleaſure and joy will it ſpread over ſuch an aſſembly, when children are brought by their parents, and publicly dedicated to Chriſt in baptiſm; ſolemnly, and with all their hearts engaging to bring them up for him, and laying hold of the gracious promiſe of the covenant to their children: All will conſider theſe children, as heirs of the bleſſings of the covenant, and numbered among the ſaved, confident that the parents will faithfully keep covenant with God; and having ſeen the general happy effect of this, they will join in all the ſolemnities of this tranſaction, with great pleaſure, fervency, and joy, and every one be edified, and animated to the duty of his ſtation, and go away with enlarged

larged views of the grace of the gospel, and the condescension and love of Christ.

ANSWER 3d. Though some of the children of parents who appear eminently pious, and to take much pains in the education of their children, do, when they come to adult age, renounce all religious duty, and live in open vice; yet this affords no real evidence, that the doctrine to which this fact is alleged as an objection, is not true; for,

1. We cannot be certain that those who appear to be christians, and to excel many others, are really such. They may deceive others, and be themselves deceived, and never truly and with their heart, devote their children to God. The first, in appearance and profession, may be last, and wholly destitute of true holiness. No argument can be justly formed from such instances, unless there were a certainty that the parents are real christians, and faithful in keeping covenant with God.

2. Parents who are real christians, and excel in some respects in pious zeal, and in the practise of many of the duties of christianity, may be very deficient and unfaithful in their duty to their children. They may be guilty of neglecting that which is important and essential in the good education of children, in some instances at least, and of doing or saying that, which tends to hurt and ruin their children, in some particular instances, and on some occasions, which may be the means of giving an evil bias to their minds, and issue in their abandoning themselves to vice. And this may be the case with regard to one particular child, while they are more wise and faithful in their treatment and education of their other children. And such instances of neglect or wrong conduct, toward some or all of their children, may so displease God, as to give up the children to sin and ruin. It has been observed,

ſerved, that parents may keep covenant, as it reſpects their own perſons, and yet neglect the duties of it, as it reſpects their children. This is ſo difficult a part of duty, and ſatan is ſo watchful, and exerts all his policy and power to prevent parents doing it, and to promote that which is contrary to it; and the proper education of children is ſo little underſtood, and the importance of it not much attended to and realized; and the encouragement and promiſe God has given, to the faithful diſcharge of this duty, is ſo generally not believed, or overlooked, that it may be reaſonably ſuppoſed, that ſome parents who are eminently pious, and devoted to the duties of religion in other reſpects, may ſo fail of their duty to their children, in ſome important part of their education, as ſhall tend to bring a curſe on them, rather than a bleſſing.*

And it is left to the reader to conſider, whether it be not more reaſonable, and for the honour of God and religion, when ſuch inſtances of the impiety of the children of parents who appear eminently godly, take place, to impute it to the unfaithfulneſs of the parents in this branch of their duty, in ſome very important and capital inſtance, rather than to curtail the covenant of grace, and doubt of the promiſe of ſaving bleſſings to the children of parents who are faithful in keeping covenant; or of the faithfulneſs of God to fulfil his promiſe, whenever the condition is in ſome good meaſure performed.

ANSWER

* When all this is well conſidered, it will not appear incredible, or unaccountable, that pious parents, and even thoſe who may appear eminently ſo, in many reſpects, may be greatly deficient and unfaithful in their duty to their children; and much more ſo, than in any other branch of their duty, notwithſtanding the natural affection they have to them, and the deſire they muſt be ſuppoſed to have of their ſalvation. And he who contemplates and keeps in view, the nature and extent of this duty, and carefully obſerves the general conduct of thoſe parents, whoſe piety is not queſtioned, as it reſpects their children, will find it confirmed by lamentable and too notorious fact. On what ground then can it be doubted?

ANSWER 4th. Though parents who have given up their children to Chriſt in baptiſm, and promiſed to bring them up for him, have in ſo many inſtances neglected their duty, and come ſo far ſhort in the education of their children, that they have generally grown up without any appearance of piety; this is not a ſufficient reaſon to lay aſide the inſtitution of Chriſt, and practice it no more. We are to hope that profeſſors of religion, will in future be more faithful. The church has no right to reject thoſe who offer their children in baptiſm, and profeſs and promiſe to devote them to Chriſt, and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and refuſe to receive their children, as holy and belonging to Chriſt, becauſe ſo many children of profeſſors who have been thus devoted, and received, have diſcovered, when they became adult, that they were not truly pious, and have refuſed to obey Chriſt. This ſhould rather excite chriſtians to watch over each other, and exhort one another daily, reſpecting their duty to their children; and awaken the church to the practice of a more ſtrict and thorough diſcipline; and to take more care of the children of the church, thoſe lambs of the flock, as ſoon as they are capable of public admonition and diſcipline.

There are too many inſtances of perſons who are received into the church, in adult years, as holy and real chriſtians, who afterwards fall from their chriſtian character and violate the laws of Chriſt, and are rejected by the church, or ought to be, as thoſe who have diſappointed their hopes and expectations: Yet ſuch inſtances, however numerous, cannot be juſtly alleged as a reaſon why they ſhould receive no more, upon their profeſſion and engagements to ſerve the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, becauſe they have been deceived in others, who have fallen from their chriſtian profeſſion. This ought

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to excite the church to greater care in receiving perſons as real chriſtians; and to a more ſtrict and conſtant watchfulneſs over thoſe they do receive, and the uſe of all proper means to prevent their apoſtaſy, and all unchriſtian conduct, and to induce them to obey Chriſt in all things.

QUESTION II. If there were ſuch a promiſe of ſaving bleſſings to children, on a condition to be performed by the parents, and which they engage, is it not reaſonable to ſuppoſe this condition would be ſpecified, and ſo particularly ſtated and deſcribed, that parents might diſtinctly know what it is, and when they come up to it, or fall ſhort of it; and would not this be neceſſary, in order to afford any proper encouragement and ſatisfaction to parents? The covenant of grace contains promiſes of ſalvation to faith, repentance, or love to God; and theſe are defined, and the nature and concomitants of them particularly deſcribed; and the promiſe is made not only to thoſe who exerciſe theſe graces in a particular high degree; but to the loweſt poſſible degree of theſe; ſo that if perſons know they have any thing of this nature, they may from that be certain of ſalvation. But in the caſe before us, no ſuch thing is ſuppoſed, or can be true; but the matter is left ſo vague and uncertain, that none can know, whether he has come up to the condition to which the promiſe is made, or not, or how far he is from it. Is not this a ſtrong and unanſwerable objection to the doctrine now advanced?

ANSWER 1ſt. All will grant, that there are certain exerciſes of heart, a conſtant courſe and degree of them, and of external duties, which are the proper expreſſion of thoſe exerciſes of heart, which parents owe to their children, and which may reaſonably be expected of pious parents, and muſt take place, in order to their acting

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a conſiſtent part, and anſwerable to the chriſtian character, and to ſuch a relation. And they who practiſe infant baptiſm, conſider parents as profeſſing a deſire and willingneſs to perform this duty; and promiſing to be faithful in doing it: That they profeſs to give up their children to Chriſt, deſiring for them, above all other things, that they may be ſaved; and promiſe to bring them up for Chriſt, and act a faithful part to them, agreeable to ſuch dedication, and ſuch deſires.

Now, if any one will tell what is implied in this engagement and duty, which the parent muſt perform, in order to fulfil his promiſe, and perſeveringly conduct agreeable to this tranſaction; and ſtate it with ſuch exactneſs, that the parent may know when he has come fully up to it, or how far he has been deficient; then it will be eaſy to tell preciſely what is the condition on the parents part, to which the promiſe of ſaving bleſſings to his children is made, ſo that the parent may know whether he has performed it or not, and how far he has fallen ſhort of it; for he has already done it, in ſhewing what is the duty promiſed by the parent, and juſtly expected of him.

But if this cannot be done, it is as much of an objection to there being any duty promiſed or required of the parent, in order to his acting a faithful and conſiſtent part towards his child, as that which has been mentioned in the queſtion under conſideration, to there being a promiſe of ſaving bleſſings to children, on a condition which is required, and yet not preciſely ſtated. If duty may be required of parents towards their children, which they may and ought to promiſe to perform, without pointing out the preciſe degree of duty, or the particular manner and circumſtances in which it is to be done; then this ſame duty, thus required and promiſed, may be made the condition of ſaving bleſſings to the children.

Surely,

Surely, if it may be required and promiſed, it may be required and promiſed as a condition, to which God, who requires it, promiſes bleſſings to the children.

ANSWER 2d. The condition of the promiſe is expreſſed as particularly, and as plain as the nature of the caſe will admit; and ſo as to be ſufficiently intelligible to an honeſt, pious mind. The whole is contained and expreſſed in the following ſentence and injunction, "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The whole Bible is ſuited to explain this ſentence, and ſhow what is the meaning of it, and the duty implied in it, ſo that he who is willing to know and do his duty, in this branch of it, and comply with this injunction, and will properly attend to the matter, will ſufficiently underſtand the meaning of it, and be at no undeſirable uncertainty concerning it.

It is certain, that in theſe words a duty is enjoined on parents, or a courſe of exerciſes, exertions and conduct, to ſuch a degree, and with ſuch conſtancy, care and faithfulneſs, as to *educate their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* And all will grant that this command is ſufficiently plain, and does clearly point out the duty, ſo that parents may know what it is, and comply with it; and that it is ſtated as preciſely as the nature of the caſe and kind of the duty will admit. And muſt it not then, for the ſame reaſon be granted, that it is as ſufficiently plain to be the condition of a promiſe; and that, as ſuch, it is as fully and clearly expreſſed, as the nature of the caſe requires, or will admit?

ANSWER 3d. The condition, or the kind and meaſure of the duty to which this promiſe is made, is as preciſely and fully ſtated in the ſcripture, as is deſirable, and ſo as to be ſuited to anſwer the end deſigned by it.

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It is enough for the parents to know, that it is a covenant of GRACE, into which God enters with them, and that the condition of the promise of saving blessings to their children, is as low as can be, consistent with answering the ends of it; and that Christ, who is infinitely gracious, and knows what is right, and has stated the condition, will not be rigorous, but make all proper and possible allowances in their favour; even all that they can reasonably desire; for *grace* will look on their exercises and conduct in the most favourable light. They have therefore all possible encouragement, to exert themselves constantly, and strain every nerve in doing their duty to their children, that they may be faithful, and come up to the condition; knowing that no advantage will be taken of them, for their many imperfections and defects, which they constantly confess and lament, if they be laborious and faithful, in any good degree answerable to the importance of the case, and the motives and encouragements which are set before them. And their not knowing whether they have come up to that degree of exercise, care and faithfulness, which is the condition of the promise, and fear that they have not, will be a constant spur to them, to greater care, watchfulness and diligence, that, if by any means, they may obtain the promised blessing to their children. And the greater and more constant their care and exertions are, and the more strongly they find their hearts turned unto their children, in the practice of parental duty toward them, the more comfort they will have, in the hope, and confidence, that the heart of their children will be turned to them, and that God will bless, and save them; while they are still constantly and with importunity looking to him for grace and assistance to do their duty to their children, and that they may be blessed indeed.

QUESTION III. Is not this a *legal ſcheme* of Salvation, according to this, is given to children for the good works of the parents; or the children are ſaved by the obedience and good, and meritorious deeds of the parents. Is not this directly contrary to ſalvation by free grace!

ANSWER 1ſt. It is certain from ſcripture, that God has given bleſſings to children out of regard to the obedience and faithfulneſs of their parents and anceſtors.—There are many inſtances of this in ſcripture, which the attentive readers of it, muſt have obſerved. Abraham, Caleb, and David, are inſtances of it. Yet theſe bleſſings were as much of free grace, as if they had not been given in this way.

ANSWER 2d. Many and great bleſſings both in this world, and in heaven, are promiſed and given to men as a reward of their obedience: And yet theſe bleſſings and rewards are as much the fruit of free grace, as they could be, if given in any other way; becauſe they are really no more *deſerving* of the bleſſings and rewards they receive, than if they had not obeyed.

ANSWER 3d. The obedience and faithfulneſs of the parents in keeping covenant, does not render their children more deſerving of bleſſings, than if they had not obeyed. Holineſs and ſalvation come to the children, as much a free gift, and there is as much free grace in this gift to them, as if it did not come to them in this way, in connection with the obedience of the parents. And the parents obedience has not the leaſt merit or deſert of ſuch bleſſings. Therefore, the promiſe made to them, of ſaving bleſſings to their children, on condition of their obedience, is a *gracious* promiſe, wholly the fruit and expreſſion of free, undeſerved grace; as much as if

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their obedience were not the condition. And the parents depend on free, ſovereign grace, for a heart and aſſiſtance to perform the condition. So that it is all of free grace, from beginning to end; from the foundation, to the topſtone. The covenant of grace is therefore hereby enlarged, and contains more grace, by the promiſe of ſaving mercy to the children of thoſe who keep the covenant, than if it contained no ſuch promiſe. The parents, who have been in this way, the inſtruments of bringing ſalvation to their children, will forever admire and adore that infinite free grace, which ſo conſtituted the covenant of grace, as to include their children with them, and given them grace to be faithful in the covenant, and perform the condition on which the promiſe of ſalvation to their children was made, and by which it has been conveyed to them. The children who are ſaved in this way, will forever celebrate and adore that ſovereign grace of God, exerciſed towards them in conſtituting ſuch a gracious covenant, and ordering that they ſhould be born of ſuch pious parents, by whom they were brought into covenant, and dedicated to God; and in giving their parents a heart to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and in this way giving them holineſs and ſalvation. This is therefore, ſo far from being inconſiſtent with ſalvation by free, ſovereign grace, that it ſerves to diſplay it; and inſtead of curtailing, it enlarges the covenant of grace.

QUESTION IV. How are the children who are thus in covenant, and holy, in the ſenſe explained, to be treated by the church?

ANSWER. Before they come to years of underſtanding, ſo as to be capable of acting in matters of religion for themſelves, they are not to be admitted to receive the Lord's ſupper, becauſe they are incapable of receiving

ing any benefit by it, or of attending upon it in the manner, and for the ends prescribed by Christ, viz. to do it in remembrance of him. But when they shall be able to act for themselves, the church of which they are members, is to expect and require that they conduct as pious christians, and profess and appear to understand the doctrines and duties of christianity, and to be willing to obey Christ, in keeping all his commandments, and attending on all his institutions, to which they are to be admitted, and treated in all respects as the disciples of Christ. But if they be immoral, or neglect the duties of christianity, and refuse or neglect to make a christian profession, and attend upon the Lord's supper, the church is to use proper means to reclaim them, and bring them to their duty; and if they still neglect and refuse to hear the church, and comply with their duty, they are to be rejected and cast out of the church, and treated in all respects as any adult persons are to be treated, who have been members of the church, and are rejected for disobedience to the laws of Christ.

As soon as the children are capable of being taught, they are to be instructed and told, what their standing is, what has been done for them; what will be expected and required of them, when they come to act for themselves; that if they do not then say "I am the Lord's," and subscribe with their hand to the Lord, and comply with all the institutions of Christ, they will fall under the censure of the church, and be cast out, as unworthy of the station into which they were brought by their parents. And this is constantly to be held up to their view, and urged upon them.

It has been observed, that if the laws given by Moses to the congregation of Israel, were strictly observed, no child who was disobedient to his parents, and refused to serve the Lord, could be suffered to live among them;

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for all such were to be put to death. And that this law was suited to have a constant and mighty influence on parents, to awaken and excite them to the greatest care, prudence and faithfulness in educating their children; and on the minds of children, from their early days, to lead them to hearken to their parents, and obey them, and to make it their great concern to fear and serve the Lord.

The christian institution, now under consideration, is suited to answer the same end, and to have a salutary effect on the minds, both of parents and their children. Though under the milder dispensation of the gospel, no one is to be put to death for rejecting Christ and the gospel, even though he were before this, a visible member of the christian church; yet he is to be cut off, and cast out of the visible kingdom of Christ. And every child in the church, who grows up in disobedience to Christ, and in this most important concern will not obey his parents, is thus to be rejected and cut off, after all proper means are used by his parents and the church to reclaim him, and bring him to his duty. Such an event will be viewed by christian parents as worse than death, or only to have a child taken out of the world by death; and is suited to be a constant, strong motive to concern, prayer and fidelity respecting their children, and their education: And it tends to have an equally desirable effect on the minds of children; and must greatly impress the hearts of those who are in any degree considerate and serious.

QUESTION V. ACCORDING to this plan, if children grow up and continue in a state of sin, and a course of disobedience to Christ, it must be owing to the parents neglect, and breach of covenant; must they not therefore be censured and excommunicated by the church, as well as their children, as covenant breakers?

ANSWER. This queſtion muſt be anſwered in the negative, for the following reaſons:

1. Though it be evident, that parents have not done their duty to thoſe of their children, who grow up and continue in diſobedience to Chriſt, and refuſe to walk in the way in which they ſhould go; yet if no courſe of actions, nor any particular overt act, contrary to their duty; nor any groſs, known and deſigned neglect of their duty to their children, can be proved, or alleged againſt them, there can be no ground of public cenſure.

2. Though it could be proved, and were known, that they had been guilty of many miſtakes, much imprudence, and great neglects, in the education of their children, and were far from doing their duty, and complying with all that is implied in bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and ſo had broken the covenant between God and them, with reſpect to their duty to their children; yet this may be conſiſtent with their being true believers, or real chriſtians; and therefore, cannot be a ſufficient ground of cenſuring them, and caſting them out of the church; for nothing can be the proper ground of ſuch cenſure, but thoſe overt acts, or that neglect of duty, which if perſiſted in, is inconſiſtent with a perſon's being a real chriſtian. It has been obſerved, that a perſon may be a true believer, and be intitled to the bleſſings of the covenant of grace, as to his own perſon, and yet not perform the condition of the covenant, as it reſpects his children: Therefore, though the latter may be proved, this is no evidence againſt him, with reſpect to the former; conſequently is not a ground of rejecting him as no chriſtian.

QUESTION VI. IT is a known truth, and often mentioned, that parents cannot give or convey grace to their children, by any thing they can do. Is not the doctrine

doctrine now advanced, which teaches that the holineſs and ſalvation of children, is the certain conſequence of their parents doing their duty to them, contrary to this truth?

ANSWER. It is true, that holineſs is wrought in the heart, by the power and energy of the holy ſpirit, and cannot be communicated to children by any means or endeavours uſed by parents; but is wholly effected by divine influences. In this view and ſenſe, parents do not convey grace to their children; this is wholly out of their power: It is the work of God. But it does not follow from this, that God has not ſo conſtituted the covenant of grace, that holineſs ſhall be communicated by him to the children, in conſequence of the faithful, commanded endeavours of their parents, ſo that, in this ſenſe and by virtue of ſuch a conſtitution, they do, by their faithful endeavours, convey ſaving bleſſings to their children.

In this way, they give exiſtence to their children.—God produces their exiſtence by his own almighty energy; but by the conſtitution he has eſtabliſhed, they receive their exiſtence from their parents, or by their means. By an eſtabliſhed conſtitution, parents convey moral depravity to their children. And if God has been pleaſed to make a conſtitution, and appoint a way, in his covenant of grace with man, by which pious parents may convey, and communicate moral rectitude or holineſs to their children, they by uſing the appointed means, do it as really and effectually, as they communicate exiſtence to them. In this ſenſe therefore, they may convey and give holineſs and ſalvation to their children.

This is a maxim often mentioned by parents, when the faithful education of their children is brought into view,

and urged, that parents cannot give grace to their children, however faithful they are in their education. This is not true, in the ſenſe now mentioned, if the covenant of grace contains a promiſe that their children ſhall be holy, if they will uſe all proper and commanded endeavours to this end, by which there is a conſtituted connection between ſuch means, and the end. And whether this has not been proved from ſcripture, the reader will judge, when he has conſidered what has now been offered on this point. There is reaſon to fear, and even to believe, that the above maxim is too often mentioned by parents, in order to exculpate and excuſe themſelves from fault, when their children grow up ungoverned, ignorant and vicious. In this view, it is deſirable it ſhould be laid aſide.

QUESTION VII. If this be a doctrine plainly taught in ſcripture, and explains and points out the meaning, deſign and importance of the baptiſm of the children of believers, why has it not been underſtood and believed in all ages in the chriſtian church; but remained in the dark, and unknown till this time?

ANSWER 1ſt. It was taught by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, as they ſaid things which do neceſſarily imply it, as has been ſhown: And it was therefore doubtleſs underſtood and believed in the churches conſtituted by the Apoſtles; which, with other doctrines and practices enjoined by them, was ſoon corrupted, miſunderſtood and in a great meaſure loſt in darkneſs and error. And that this was an apoſtolic inſtitution, may be argued from the opinion which was handed down in the chriſtian church, that baptized infants, were regenerated; and hence their baptiſm was called regeneration, which appears by the writings of thoſe who lived in the ſecond century

century of the chriſtian church, and ſince. Though the true reaſon of baptized children being conſidered and called holy, viz. their being the children of parents who dedicated them to God, and had engaged to bring them up for God, on which condition they were to be holy and ſaved, according to the divine promiſe, was, ſoon after the days of the Apoſtles, too generally overlooked and miſunderſtood; yet the doctrine, that ſuch children were to be conſidered to be regenerated and holy, was ſtill taught and believed; and has been embraced by many, even to this day. But inſtead of underſtanding the true ground of this, and giving a rational and ſcriptural account of it, the moſt of them have either given no reaſon for it, or attributed it, not to what the parents had done, or ſhould do for them, and the promiſe made to them in the covenant of grace, upon their faithfulneſs; but to the efficacy of the ordinance of baptiſm itſelf; and thought that the bare adminiſtration of baptiſm would ſanctify and ſave them, without regard to any condition to be performed by their parents, or others.

ANSWER 2d. This doctrine has been expreſsly aſſerted by writers of this and the laſt centuries:* And many divines, if not moſt, who have written in favour of infant

* "Baptiſm ſeals our introduction and initiation into the viſible church and body of Chriſt, and our adoption to the heavenly inheritance."—— Calvin. Epiſt. 185.

Dr. Thomas Goodwin, in his diſcourſe on 1 Cor. vii. 14.—*Elſe were your children unclean, but now are they holy*, ſays, "The meaning is this, that whereas unbelievers children are, in the account of the goſpel, and of God himſelf, under the goſpel, pronounced unclean (that is, as remaining in the ſtate in which they were born, viz. of ſin and uncleanneſs)—On the contrary (ſaith he) *your* children (although born in ſin, as others) are yet, by God's true ſentence of them, in his word and revealed will, proclaimed *holy*; and ſo are to be judged of by us, as truly regenerate and born again. He means therefore, evangelical holineſs: That though they be born in ſin, as others

infant baptiſm, have ſaid that which really implies this doctrine, while they aſſert that the children of believers are received into covenant with their parents, and have a viſible title to the promiſe of the covenant, which is, that God will be a God to them, or their God; and therefore are *federally holy*. Which implies the whole that has been now advanced on this point, if theſe words be taken

others are, yet they are in part ſanctified, or regenerate and made holy in ſtate, and ſo are not in a ſtate of ſin, but of evangelical holineſs.

For the *terminus*, or object of our thoughts, it is *real holineſs*; that is, which we are to think real and true. Some divines have ſaid, that becauſe the church was to judge any ſuch child holy, though all were not ſo, that therefore it is but a reputative holineſs, and an outward, ſacramental holineſs, that we, in our judgments are to give them. But they are miſtaken; for though in the event indeed, it proves in many of them, but a reputative holineſs, and only in eſteem; yet ſtill ſo, as the *terminus* of the church's judgment, or that holineſs, which they are, in their judgments to attribute to them, is true, real holineſs: But it is called reputative, only in reſpect to the event, in that we ſhould attribute true holineſs, to thoſe who prove not ſo; Yet ſtill the holineſs we are to think in them, is no other than real to our thoughts: Even as it is in our judging thoſe of riper years to be ſaints, when admitted into churches; it follows, not that it is a mere outward holineſs, that is to be the *terminus* of our thoughts, or that which we are to content ourſelves to find in them, or think of them: But that they are truly and really holy; though in the event it proves no other, in many, than an outward, titular holineſs; yet the holineſs we pitch upon, and aim at, and judge of, and embrace men for, is a holineſs, to our judgments real, though we be often miſtaken."——Dr. Goodwin's Works, ſecond volume. Of Election, page 406, 422.

The Aſſembly of Divines, at Weſtminſter, in the Shorter Catechiſm, compoſed by them, ſay, "Baptiſm is a ſacrament, wherein the waſhing with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, *doth ſignify and ſeal our ingrafting into Chriſt, and partaking of the bleſſings of the covenant of grace*, and our engagement to be the Lord's." And in the next ſentence ſay, "The infants of ſuch as are members of the viſible church, are to be baptized." This catechiſm is received by the church of Scotland, and by all, or moſt of the preſbyterian and congregational churches in England, Ireland, and America; and taught to their children. If baptiſm ſignifies and ſeals, what it is here ſaid to do; then infants, when they are baptized, are viſibly, or in the view of the church, ingrafted into Chriſt, and partakers of the bleſſings of the covenant of grace; which is the ſame with being intitled to holineſs and ſalvation, on ſome condition, which, if not expreſſed, is ſuppoſed and underſtood.

taken in any proper conſiſtent ſenſe; or if indeed they have any real meaning. It cannot be denied indeed, that many of theſe ſame authors have paſſed over this point, without an explanation, or have ſo explained this aſſertion, as to leave it without any conſiſtent ſenſe, or nothing but words without any meaning: And have denied that to be the meaning, which is the only natural and conſiſtent one.

Answer 3d. If this doctrine were wholly neglected and loſt, ever ſince the age in which the Apoſtles lived, and had not been revived or thought of, till this time, or even till the millennium ſhall commence, this would be no argument againſt the truth of it, whenever, upon inquiry, it be found to be contained in the Bible.

Thoſe doctrines and duties of chriſtianity, which are moſt contrary to the ſelfiſhneſs, pride, worldlineſs, and the various natural corrupt inclinations of men, are moſt expoſed to be ſoon rejected and loſt, or greatly corrupted; and though once taught and eſtabliſhed, and continue to be contained in divine revelation, will be neglected and diſcarded, when the power and ſpirit of true religion declines. And they will not be long maintained and practiſed in their original purity and ſtrictneſs, in chriſtian churches, unleſs divine influences be granted, to form the hearts of ſucceſſive generations, to diſcern and love the truth and practiſe it. This obſervation has been verified by fact and experience. The chriſtian church, in general, ſoon became corrupt, and ſunk into darkneſs and error, in principles and practice, after the days of the Apoſtles. And this declenſion and apoſtacy from the truth once delivered to the ſaints, became greater and more general, as the ſpirit of true religion vaniſhed; and error in doctrine, and ſuperſtition and corruption in practice encreaſed. There were, from

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time to time, ſome degree of partial revivals of truth and religion; and particular men were raiſed up to inveſtigate and declare, ſome of the moſt important truths contained in the Bible, and oppoſe the general corruption in chriſtian doctrine and duty: And this took place to a remarkable degree and extent in the reformation from popery. But who will preſume to ſay or think, that any of the different ſects and denominations of chriſtians in the proteſtant world, have come up to the purity in doctrine and practice, of the primitive church; or that the Bible is yet underſtood, in all the important branches of truth and duty, as they are there revealed? Chriſtians in general are ſtill in a great degree of darkneſs, and much of the light held up in the Bible is not received, through the inattention, prejudices and blindneſs of men. The ſcripture has not been ſo well and ſo fully underſtood, as it will be in the days of the millennium, when the Spirit of God ſhall be poured out on chriſtians in general, in much greater degrees than it has been, by which they ſhall have more diſcerning, and be diſpoſed to ſearch the Bible, with a ſincere and earneſt deſire to know the truth, and a ſtrong diſpoſition to receive it, and practiſe agreeable to it. The Bible will then be improved to much better purpoſe, than it had ever been before; and many important truths and duties which had in ages before, not been underſtood or ſeen, will then appear plain and eaſy to be underſtood. Then the Bible will anſwer the end for which it is given to men, as it never had done before, as it was chiefly deſigned for that day, by the proper improvement of which, the knowledge of God, and of all revealed truth, will fill the earth, as the waters cover the ſea.

The doctrine now under conſideration, may be then well underſtood by all, and the evidence of it appear much more ſtrong and clear, than it can be made to do

now,

now, and being reduced to practice, the good effect of it will be seen, as has been observed above. This doctrine, taken in its full length and breadth, when reduced to a practice agreeable to it, is directly contrary to the natural disposition of man, and peculiarly so in many respects. And it is not expected, that however evident the truth of it is from the Bible, that it will be generally believed; and that it will be received, and properly conformed to, and practised by many churches, if by any, in the christian world, at this day. Religion, even the true spirit of christianity, must rise much higher than it now does, in order to practise the duties implied in the baptism of infants, and many other duties which are commanded, and ought to take place among christians, and in christian churches.

QUESTION VIII. If a right account of infant baptism has now been given, then the baptism of children of believers is an institution of vast importance, and an indispensible duty, as well as a great privilege; and they who deny, that infant baptism is a christian institution, and refuse to practise it, are very erroneous and wicked: Ought they not therefore, to be rejected as no christians?

ANSWER. They who believe the baptism of infants is evidently a christian institution, and think it to be as important and useful, and suited, and designed by Christ, to be of such advantage to parents and their children, and to the church, as has been represented above, must look upon those who refuse to comply with this institution, but oppose it, as in a great error, and as offending Christ, and those little ones, who being the children of believing parents, ought to be considered and received as believers in him.* But they are to be thought of, and

* See Matth. xviii. 5, 6. Luke ix. 48.

and treated, with great candour, tenderneſs, and chriſtian charity: Eſpecially ſince there is reaſon to believe, that moſt, if not all, who believe in the baptiſm of children, and practiſe it, are more guilty and offenſive to Chriſt, in their treatment of this inſtitution, than the antipedobaptiſts are. The pedobaptiſts believe infant baptiſm to be a divine inſtitution, and baptize their children; but moſt of them, if not all, refuſe to comply with, and practiſe the moſt important and eſſential duties implied in the inſtitution, which they ſolemnly profeſs and engage to do. They make uſe of the external rite, but treat it as a mere ceremony, becauſe it is the cuſtom of their denomination, or to gratify their pride, or ſuperſtition: They generally ſhew, that they do not heartily devote their children to Chriſt, by their neglect to educate them for him. In this reſpect, their children are not diſtinguiſhed from thoſe who are not baptized: And let them behave as they will, they are not treated as being under the care of the church, or ſubjects of diſcipline, and moſt, if not all the parents who bring their children to baptiſm, do not deſire they ſhould be cenſured and caſt out by the church, if when they are adult they refuſe to obey Chriſt; but ſtand ready to oppoſe it. It is a common practice to baptize the children of thoſe who are not viſible believers, who do not obey Chriſt, in attending upon all his inſtitutions, and, in many inſtances are in other reſpects immoral: And in thoſe churches, where no children are baptized, but of parents who make a profeſſion of religion, and are members of the church, the baptiſm of children is generally treated as a mere ceremony: When that is performed, no more is done for the children by the parents, or the church, than is done for thoſe who are not baptized. How ſhort do they come of the duty which is reaſonable and important, and ſolemnly engaged by the parents,

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and the church, if the above repreſentation of this duty be in any meaſure juſt! How greatly is this inſtitution abuſed and perverted even to bad purpoſes, by moſt of the pedobaptiſts! The error and ſin of the antipedobaptiſts, conſiſts in their not believing infant baptiſm to be an inſtitution of Chriſt, and therefore rejecting it, as a mere human invention. Theirs is a ſin of ignorance. Their ignorance and unbelief are criminal; but who are the greateſt criminals in their treatment of this inſtitution, it is eaſy to determine.

The words of Chriſt to them, who brought to him a woman guilty of adultery, and ſaid Moſes commanded ſuch to be ſtoned, are applicable to this caſe. "He that is without ſin among you, let him caſt the firſt ſtone." Too many of the pedobaptiſts, have treated thoſe who deny infant baptiſm, with unreaſonable cenſoriouſneſs and ſeverity; eſpecially ſince they themſelves have been ſo faulty in this very matter; and have denied or neglected, in principle and practice, the moſt uſeful, important, and eſſential part of this inſtitution. To ſuch, may be applied the words of the Prophet Obed, to the hoſt of Iſrael, with a little variation. "Ye have condemned and cenſured your brethren, with a ſeverity and rage that reacheth up to heaven. But are there not with *you*, even *with you*, ſins againſt the Lord your God?"*

THIS ſubject will be concluded by obſerving, that what has been offered from the ſcripture, to prove that the baptiſm of infants is a divine inſtitution; and whatever other arguments from it have been mentioned by others, or may be thought of, ſtand good, and ought to be conſidered in their full weight, independent of what has been now ſaid, to ſhow what is the deſign and import of

* Chron. xxvii. 9, 10.

of this inſtitution; and whether this can be ſufficiently ſupported from ſcripture, or not: Though it is thought that the view which has been here given of it, if it be admitted, will ſerve to ſtrengthen the evidence that it is an inſtitution of Chriſt, and to ſhow the propriety and importance of it. Therefore, they who ſhall not be convinced that there is any promiſed connection between the faithfulneſs of parents in the covenant, as it reſpects their children, and the conveyance of ſaving bleſſings to the latter, will not find the evidence on which they believe and practice infant baptiſm, in any degree weakened: While they who believe that ſuch a connection is evident from ſcripture, will, by this view of the matter, be more confirmed in the reality, uſefulneſs and importance of this inſtitution; and excited to improve it accordingly. It is preſumed that this attempt has no tendency to prejudice any one againſt the practice of infant baptiſm, or to lead him to doubt whether it be a chriſtian inſtitution: And that no one can have any reaſon to think, that the belief of ſuch a connection, and a practice agreeable to it, can tend, in any reſpect, to ſlur the inſtitution, or to render it leſs important and uſeful to the chriſtian church; or be hurtful to any.

If what has been now offered on this ſubject, ſhall in any degree awaken the attention of divines, and chriſtians in general, to this matter, and excite to a more careful and ſtrict examination of it, which, it is thought, has not yet been thoroughly explored; but has been generally treated in too looſe and indeterminate a manner; and if, in conſequence of this, greater light on this point ſhall be obtained, and a more conſiſtent and ſcriptural account of it ſhall be given, than is here exhibited, the compoſing and reading of theſe pages will not be in vain.

THE

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE Lord's Supper is alſo an inſtitution of Chriſt, which he has commanded his followers to obſerve, and attend upon; and has appointed it to be celebrated in his church to the end of the world.

The elements of this ordinance, are bread and wine. The bread conſecrated and broken, repreſents the broken body of Chriſt, in his death on the croſs. The wine poured out, repreſents his blood in his death, which was ſhed for the remiſſion of ſins. The profeſſed followers of Chriſt, by eating the bread and drinking the wine, when conſecrated and bleſſed, by prayer and thankſgiving, and diſtributed to them by the officers of the church, do, by this tranſaction, profeſs cordially to receive Chriſt by faith, and to live upon him, loving him, and truſting in him for pardon and conplete redemption, conſecrating themſelves to his ſervice. And by the miniſters of the goſpel, conſecrating thoſe elements, and ordering them to be diſtributed to the communicants; Chriſt is exhibited as an allſufficient Saviour, and the promiſe of ſalvation is expreſſed, and ſealed to all his friends. This is therefore a covenant tranſaction, in which thoſe who partake of the bread and wine, expreſs their faith in Chriſt, that they are his friends, and devoted to his ſervice; and their cordial compliance with the covenant of grace; and ſolemnly ſeal this covenant by partaking of theſe elements. And at the ſame time, they are a token and ſeal of the covenant of grace, on the part of Chriſt. All this is aſſerted by the Apoſtle Paul, when ſpeaking of this ordinance. "The cup of bleſſing, which we bleſs, is it not the communion of the blood of Chriſt? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Chriſt?"*

* 1 Cor. x. 16. "For

"For I have received of the Lord, that which I alſo delivered unto you, That the Lord Jeſus, in the ſame night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and ſaid, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: This do in remembrance of ME. After the ſame manner alſo, he took the cup, when he had ſupped, ſaying, *This cup is the New Teſtament in my blood.*"* And the church, by coming together, and celebrating this holy ſupper, not only profeſs their love to Chriſt, and union of heart to him; but that peculiar love and union to each other, which takes place between the true diſciples of Chriſt, and is eſſential to their character. This is expreſſed in the following words of the Apoſtle Paul. "For we, being many, are *one bread*, and *one body*: For we are all partakers of that *one bread*."†

The appointment, therefore, of this holy ſupper, is an inſtance of the wiſdom and goodneſs of Chriſt, as it is ſuited to be a repeated and continual exhibition of a crucified Saviour, and hereby to excite the faith and love of chriſtians, and to lead them to renew their covenant with him, dedicating themſelves to his ſervice and honour. And is alſo adapted to the communicants united expreſſion of their mutual love and union of heart to each other, while they jointly partake of one common good, even all the benefits of Chriſt crucified.

That this is appointed by Chriſt to be a ſtanding ordinance, to be obſerved by his church, and by every profeſſed baptized believer in him, to the end of the world, is evident by the words and manner of the inſtitution of it, recorded by the Evangeliſts Matthew, Mark and Luke; and is farther evident by the hiſtory we have of the obſervation of it by the churches, in the days of the Apoſtles. We are told, that on the firſt day of the week,

* Chap. xi. 23, 24, 25. † 1 Cor. x. 17.

week, the diſciples at Troas, came together to break bread;* that is, to celebrate the Lord's ſupper. The church at Corinth, attended upon this ordinance from time to time; which appears from what the Apoſtle Paul ſays to them reſpecting it, when he undertakes to correct their abuſe of it.† And in order to reform them, he refers them to the original inſtitution by Chriſt, and tells them particularly what it was, as he had received it from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf; and adds the following words. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do ſhow the Lord's death *till he come.*" Which words ſtrongly aſſert, that this ordinance was to be obſerved to the end of the world, when Chriſt the Lord ſhall come the ſecond time, without ſin unto ſalvation.

This ordinance, according to the nature, ſignification and extent of it, is to be repeated by the ſame perſons to the end of life, as it expreſſes the believer's living upon Chriſt; and the nouriſhment of his ſoul, by faith in him, and is ſuited to excite renewed acts of chriſtian love and holineſs. There is the ſame reaſon why a participation of it ſhould be repeated, as there is that it ſhould be once attended. "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do ſhow the Lord's death till he come."‡ There is a difference between this ordinance and that of baptiſm, in this reſpect. As the latter is the initiating ordinance and ſeal by which perſons are viſibly introduced into the church and kingdom of Chriſt. And this being *once* done, the end of it is anſwered, and there can be no reaſon or propriety in repeating it, by applying it more than once to the ſame perſon.

The infant children of believers are as capable ſubjects of baptiſm, and of all that is ſignified by it, as adults are, as has been ſhown. But as they are not capable of that which is ſignified by partaking of the Lord's ſupper, till they arrive to

* Acts xx. 7. † 1 Cor. xi. ‡ 1 Cor. xi. 26.

years of underſtanding, this is not to be adminiſtred to them before that time, when they ſhall be able to "diſcern the Lord's body, and examine themſelves." There is no evidence that the circumciſed children in Iſrael were admitted to the paſſover, and to partake of the paſcal lamb, until they were able to underſtand the reaſon and end of that inſtitution. The Jews ſay, children did not partake of the paſſover till they arrived to the age of twelve years. This ſeems to be confirmed by the hiſtory we have of the parents of Jeſus taking him with them to the feaſt of the paſſover at Jeruſalem, when he was twelve years old, which plainly implies that they did not do it before. "Now his parents went to Jeruſalem every year at the feaſt of the paſſover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jeruſalem, after the cuſtom of the feaſt."* This may be conſidered as a guide to chriſtian churches, in admitting baptized children to the Lord's ſupper.

This ordinance, according to the nature and deſign of it, is to be adminiſtred and attended upon *publicly*, by every particular church; and is not deſigned to be adminiſtred privately, to one ſingle perſon. Of this we have no example in ſcripture: But the diſciples, the whole church, *came together* to break bread, and eat the Lord's ſupper. "And upon the firſt day of the week, when the diſciples *came together to break bread*."† "When ye *come together* therefore *into one place*, this is not to eat the Lord's ſupper. Wherefore, my brethren, *when ye come together to eat*, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; *that ye come not together* unto condemnation."‡

As to the frequency of adminiſtring this ordinance in a church; this does not appear to be fixed by any precept or example in ſcripture; and therefore ſeems to be left to the diſcretion of the church to determine how often

* Luke ii. 41, 42. † Acts xx. vii. ‡ 1 Cor. xi. 20, 33, 34.

ten they will attend upon it, and have it adminiſtred to them, according to their circumſtances, and as they ſhall think it to be moſt convenient to them, and moſt for the honour of Chriſt, and their edification. It has been often ſaid, that chriſtians in the firſt ages of the church, celebrated the Lord's ſupper, at leaſt every Lord's day. But it may be aſked, by what authentic hiſtory this can be made evident? What author has produced this evidence? And if it were certain, that ſome churches did attend upon it every Lord's day, and oftener, this would not prove that this was commanded by Chriſt, or his Apoſtles. Some have thought it evident that this ordinance was attended by the firſt chriſtian church, which was formed by the Apoſtles at Jeruſalem, at leaſt every firſt day of the week, if not every time they met for public worſhip, which they muſt have done by the direction of the Apoſtles; and is therefore as binding on all chriſtian churches to the end of the world, as if there were an expreſs precept to attend upon it in the ſame manner, and ſo often. But the words on which this concluſion is grounded, do not appear ſufficient to ſupport it, when carefully examined. They are theſe: "And they continued ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles doctrine, and fellowſhip, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from houſe to houſe, did eat their meat with gladneſs and ſingleneſs of heart."* "They continued ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles doctrine." That is, they attended conſtantly on the inſtructions and preaching of the Apoſtles, and ſtedfaſtly adhered to the truths delivered by them. "And in fellowſhip:" That is, in communicating and making collections and diſtribution, to ſupply the bodily neceſſities of thoſe who ſtood in need of aſſiſtance and ſupport. This is the

* Acts ii. 42, 46.

meaning of the word κοινωνια, which is here tranſlated *fellowſhip*. "And in breaking of bread." This probably means their partaking of the Lord's ſupper. "And in prayers." That is, joining in public prayers, and in ſinging pſalms, which is included in prayer; which were conſtantly performed when they attended the other parts of public worſhip. Here then every part of their public worſhip is mentioned, viz. public teaching; diſtribution to the neceſſities of the poor ſaints; attendance on the Lord's ſupper; and prayer; including pſalmody, which is devotion, and a particular manner of prayer. But it does not follow, from this enumeration of the different parts of their public worſhip, that every part was attended upon, every time they met for prayer or preaching; or that they made a contribution for the poor, or broke bread, every time they met together for public worſhip: But that theſe were performed, as often as was convenient and proper. Breaking bread from houſe to houſe, and eating their meat with gladneſs and ſingleneſs of heart,* does not appear to mean their eating the Lord's ſupper from houſe to houſe; but their partaking of their common food, and eating together; exerciſing liberality and friendſhip one towards another, in eating their common meals. But if breaking bread does here mean the Lord's ſupper, and it were certain that believers at Jeruſalem did, in their then peculiar and extraordinary circumſtances, adminiſter and partake of this ordinance, whenever a number of them met in a particular houſe, it would not hence follow, that the diſciples of Chriſt are by this bound in all ages of the world to attend the Lord's ſupper in the ſame manner, or thus frequently.

When it is ſaid, "And upon the firſt day of the week, when the diſciples came together to break bread:†" It does not import, that breaking bread was the only or chief

* Verſe 46. † Acts xx. 7.

chief thing for which they came together on that day; for this was not true, as appears by the relation. Nor does it follow from thoſe words, that they always came together on the firſt day of the week to break bread. It is only ſaid, that on *that* firſt day, they did ſo. They might, conſiſtent with this, come together on many other firſt days of the week, not to break bread; but to attend on other parts of public worſhip, without partaking of the Lord's ſupper.

SECTION IV.

Concerning the Diſcipline of the Church.

THE Diſcipline of a Church conſiſts in their admitting or rejecting thoſe who offer themſelves to join with them; in the members watching over each other; in reproving and admoniſhing thoſe who walk diſorderly, and taking all proper methods to reform them; and in rejecting thoſe who will not be reclaimed, but continue obſtinate and unreformed, when all proper means have been previouſly uſed to bring them to repentance.

The proper exerciſe of diſcipline, is important and neceſſary, in order to the comfort, edification, and proſperity of a church; and where this is wholly neglected in a church, it will go to ruin; and ſuch a ſociety is not worthy of the name of a chriſtian church. Therefore this is particularly enjoined by Chriſt and his Apoſtles.

The following particulars may ſerve to illuſtrate this ſubject.

I. IN the exerciſe of diſcipline, the church is to be wholly governed by the laws of Chriſt. He is the only

law giver in his church; and in exerciſing diſcipline, chriſtians are to execute his laws, and have no authority, or right to do any thing, unleſs it be agreeable to his direction and command. And whatſoever is done by the church in his name, and according to his laws, is done by authority derived from him, as they are authorized by him to execute his laws: But when, and ſo far as they deviate from this, they have no authority; and what they do is null and void, and diſapproved by him.

II. THE power to execute the laws of Chriſt, is not given by him to any one man, or to any particular claſs or order of men in the church; but to the church, as a particular and diſtinct ſociety; though ſome particular members, or officers, in the church, may in many inſtances have a diſtinguiſhed influence, and lead in the tranſactions of the church, and put into execution their deciſions. When the head of the church ſaid to Peter, "I will give unto thee, the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatſoever thou ſhalt bind on earth, ſhall be bound in heaven: And whatſoever thou ſhalt looſe on earth, ſhall be looſed in heaven;"* we are not to ſuppoſe that this commiſſion and authority was given to Peter alone, or to the Apoſtles only, or to any diſtinct ſucceſſion of men or officers in the church; but to the church, which Peter repreſented in the confeſſion he had then juſt made; and of which Chriſt ſpeaks in the preceding words, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt it." And what Chriſt ſays in the next chapter, confirms the truth of this ſuppoſition; for when he is there ſpeaking of the doing of the church, in cenſuring and excommunicating an offender, he repeats the words above mentioned, which he had ſpoken to Peter,

* Matth. xvi. 19.

Peter, and gives this ſame authority to the church, and ſanction to their doings, according to his laws. "Verily, I ſay unto you, Whatſoever ye ſhall bind on earth, ſhall be bound in heaven: And whatſoever ye ſhall looſe on earth, ſhall be looſed in heaven."* Two things appear evident from hence. In the firſt place, that Chriſt did not give this commiſſion and authority to Peter only, in diſtinction from the reſt of his diſciples; but to them all, as much as to Peter. And in the next place, that this authority was given to them, not as a diſtinct order of men in his church, but as his diſciples, and his church, as they compoſed the only church which Chriſt then had on earth, from whom all the profeſſed diſciples of Chriſt, and members of his viſible church, have deſcended, as their ſucceſſors, being the followers of Chriſt, and members of his church, as his firſt diſciples were.—Therefore, this power and authority is given to the church, and is to continue in it, as long as there is a church on earth, even to the end of the world.

III. THIS authority therefore, to maintain and execute the laws of Chriſt, is given to the church, as a body or ſociety; each member of the church having an equal concern and right to judge and act in all deciſions to be made by the church, in the exerciſe of diſcipline; and the act of the majority is to be conſidered as the act of the church, as no ſociety can decide and act in any other way. And that the whole church are in this way to judge, decide and act, is evident from ſcripture. When our Saviour is giving particular directions repecting diſcipline, he gives the authority to judge and act to the church, as a ſociety, and not to any particular member of it. "Tell it to the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican."† According to this, every matter is to

* Chap. xviii. 18. † Matth. xviii. 17.

to come before the church, and is to be decided by the judgment and voice of the church, as a body; which cannot be done in any other way but by the judgment and voice of all the members of it, or of the majority. Agreeable to this, are the words of the Apoſtle Paul to the church at Corinth, when he gave them direction to diſcipline a particular member of the church, who had been guilty of a ſcandalous crime. "In the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *when ye are gathered together*, and my ſpirit, with the power of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to deliver ſuch an one unto ſatan."* This was to be done by the church, in order to which, they muſt all come together, that it might be the act of the church. And in the whole that he ſays, on this ſubject, he ſpeaks to the whole church as concerned, and acting in this matter. "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, &c. with ſuch an one, no not to eat. Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from yourſelves that wicked perſon." And when they had rebuked and excommunicated this perſon, the Apoſtle ſpeaks of it as being done by them all, or the majority of the church. "Sufficient to ſuch a man is this puniſhment, which was inflicted by many," or by the moſt, or major part, as the word may properly be rendered.† And he ſpeaks the ſame language to other churches, when treating of this ſubject. "I beſeech you, brethren, mark them which cauſe diviſions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them: For they that are ſuch ſerve not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but their own bellies."‡ "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye withdraw

* 1 Cor. v. 4, 5. † 2 Cor. ii. 6. ‡ Rom. xvi. 17, 18.

withdraw yourſelves from every brother that walketh diſorderly, and not after the tradition which ye have received of us. And if any man obey not our word by this epiſtle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be aſhamed."* Hence it appears, that when this ſame Apoſtle, directs Timothy and Titus, reſpecting the exerciſe of diſcipline in the churches in which they preſided, he does not mean that they had any authority in the matter over the churches; but that they ſhould excite and lead the churches to a proper care and conduct in the ſtrict and faithful exerciſe of diſcipline: For in any other view and ſenſe, he would be inconſiſtent with himſelf.

It has been obſerved, that in every deciſion and act of the church, in the exerciſe of diſcipline, there muſt be the voice of the major part, or greateſt number of the church, at leaſt; and every ſuch act is to be conſidered as the act of that particular ſociety or church. But it is deſirable, that the church ſhould be unanimous in all their deciſions and votes; and therefore, all proper and poſſible care and pains ought to be taken to effect and maintain this unanimity in all their proceedings. And when this cannot be obtained, and there appears a difference in judgment among the members of the church, and a number do not view the caſe before them, in the ſame light with the majority, they are to be treated with love and tenderneſs, and the latter ought to uſe all proper means to enlighten and convince their diſſenting brethren, that they may think and act with them, and manifeſt a reluctance to proceed and act without their concurrence and conſent; and, if poſſible, perſuade them, at leaſt, to ſay, they are willing the majority ſhould act as they think beſt, and though they cannot ſee with them, at preſent, they will not be offended, nor are diſpoſed to make any diviſion or uneaſineſs in the church.

And

* 2 Theſſ. iii. 6, 14.

And the minority, who cannot act with their brethren in any inſtance, when they have offered the reaſons of their diſſent in meekneſs and love, ought to acquieſce in the deciſion of the church, ſo as to take no offence or do any thing to interrupt the peace of the church; unleſs they conſider the caſe to be ſo important, and the proceedings of the majority ſo contrary to the laws of Chriſt, that they ought to remonſtrate, and think they cannot be faithful to Chriſt and their brethren unleſs they take ſome farther ſteps. In ſuch a caſe, it will be the duty of the church to join with the diſſatisfied in aſking judgment and advice of other churches. And in any inſtance, where the matter to be decided is intricate or difficult, or when the perſon, concerning whom the deciſion is to be made, deſires it, it is proper and wiſe to aſk the advice of other churches, in order to get all the light and help they can obtain reſpecting the matter to be determined. But every particular church, after aſking counſel and advice, and making the beſt improvement of it they can, muſt act according to their own judgment, they not being bound implicitly to ſubmit to the dictates of any other churches or councils, or having authority to decide for them in any matter; or any farther than they receive light and conviction.

IV. THE females are included in the male members of the church, and are to act only by them, as thus included; or the males act for them, and the women are not to dictate and vote in the church, in any matter which is to be decided, as this would be uſurping and exerciſing that authority over the men, which is forbidden in ſcripture, and is inconſiſtent with that ſtate of inferiority to men, which God has for wiſe reaſons conſtituted, by which they are not to rule, but to be in ſubjection. But they have a right to know all the concerns and proceedings of the

the church, as they are equally intereſted in them with the male members; and it is deſirable that they ſhould be ſatisfied with all the tranſactions of the church, and know the reaſons on which they proceed. They have therefore a right to be preſent in all the meetings of the church, and ought to attend with the males, and give all the light and evidence they can in any caſe, in which it is deſired; and may propoſe any difficulty or uneaſineſs in their minds reſpecting the proceedings of the church, in order to get information and ſatisfaction. And they have a right to be regarded and treated with reſpect and kindneſs by the brethren, who ought to give the ſiſters all the light and ſatisfaction in their power, in every caſe.

When a particular church is to be formed and conſtituted in any place, the propoſed members of it, are to ſatisfy each other that they are ſo far agreed in their underſtanding and judgment reſpecting the Bible, as to the doctrines and truths therein revealed, ſo far as they regard faith and practice; and that they have ſuch a practical acquaintance with the chriſtian religion; and that their life and converſation is ſo far agreeable to the commands of Chriſt, that they can receive each other as real chriſtians to a ſtate of church fellowſhip, and agree to walk in all the commands of Chriſt, and in attendance on his worſhip and ordinances. By this they are prepared to unite in a confeſſion of their faith, or of their underſtanding and belief of the important and eſſential doctrines contained in divine revelation, and of the inſtitutions and duties which Chriſt has appointed: And to enter into mutual and ſolemn covenant, to walk in the ways and ordinances of Chriſt, blameleſs; and to aſſiſt and watch over each other in their chriſtian practice, and in the exerciſe of that diſcipline which Jeſus Chriſt has inſtituted, to prevent corruption and apoſtacy in the church,

church, in doctrine or practice, and for their mutual edification in love. And when the neceſſary officers of a church are choſen and ordained, they are prepared to attend upon all the inſtitutions of Chriſt, and to exerciſe that diſcipline which he has appointed.

In the exerciſe of this diſcipline, they are to admit or reject thoſe who offer to join with them, as members of their chriſtian ſociety; which is to be done with care, diſcerning and judgment. After proper acquaintance with ſuch, and a careful examination into their knowledge and belief of the moſt important doctrines of revelation, and their experimental acquaintance with them, and cordial approbation of them; if they appear to the church to underſtand and approve of thoſe doctrines which they hold important and neceſſary to be underſtood and believed, in order to be real chriſtians, and to be willing to devote themſelves to Chriſt, and obſerve all his commandments; and to make public profeſſion of this, and enter into a ſolemn covenant to obey all the commands of Chriſt, as members of that church, they are to receive them as real chriſtians, ſo far as they are warranted to judge and determine. But if they appear to them ignorant of the eſſential truths and doctrines of the goſpel, or not to believe them; or do not appear to have embraced them cordially and experimentally; or if their temper and conduct have not been agreeable to the goſpel, and they do not manifeſt a diſpoſition to repent and reform, they are to be rejected, as not appearing to be real chriſtians; and therefore unworthy to be viſible members of a chriſtian church.

When any who are members of the church, ſhall fall from their profeſſion and chriſtian character, by embracing error, or any unchriſtian practice, of which there is ſufficient evidence; and after proper methods taken with them to bring them to repentance and reclaim them,

without

without ſucceſs; they are to be rejected and caſt out of the church, as unworthy of a place in the viſible church of Chriſt: But may afterwards be received again, upon their giving proper evidence of true repentance.

There is to be ſpecial care taken of the children of the church, viz. the children of thoſe parents who are or have been members of the church, who have dedicated them to Chriſt, in the ordinance of baptiſm, and have been received by the church, as viſible members of Chriſt, the lambs in his flock, in the manner and on the grounds which have been before explained. Every adult member of the church ought to be concerned that theſe ſhould have a chriſtian education, and watch over one another, with reſpect to this, and direct, admoniſh and exhort, thoſe who appear negligent and deficient in their duty to their children. And every groſs and continued neglect, ought to ſubject the perſon guilty, to the cenſure of the church. And when the children arrive to an age in which they are capable of acting for themſelves in matters of religion, and making a profeſſion of their adherence to the chriſtian faith and practice, and coming to the Lord's ſupper: If they neglect and refuſe to do this, and act contrary to the commands of Chriſt in any other reſpect, all proper means are to be uſed, and methods taken to bring them to repentance, and to do their duty as chriſtians. And if they cannot be reclaimed, but continue impenitent and unreformed, they are to be rejected and caſt out of the church, as other adult members are, who perſiſt in diſobedience to Chriſt.

V. THE general rule of exerciſing diſcipline towards thoſe members who give offence in words or conduct, and which is applicable to every caſe, is given by Jeſus Chriſt in the following words: "If thy brother ſhall treſpaſs

treſpaſs againſt thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: If he ſhall hear thee, thou haſt gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witneſſes every word may be eſtabliſhed. And if he ſhall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."*

It has been ſuppoſed by ſome, if not generally, that this direction reſpects private and perſonal offences only, and that it is not applicable to general and public offences. But perhaps this will appear to be a miſtake, when the matter is properly conſidered; and that the method and ſteps here pointed out, are to be taken with every offender, as moſt agreeable to the dictates of chriſtian love, and beſt ſuited to reclaim ſuch; and the moſt proper regulation and guard to prevent unreaſonable and frivolous complaints being brought to the Church.

When a member of the church acts contrary to his chriſtian profeſſion, and tranſgreſſes any of the laws of Chriſt, and walks diſorderly, he treſpaſſes or ſins† againſt every brother in the church, and offends him as really, and as much, as if he injured him in particular in his perſon, character or eſtate: And there is the ſame reaſon and obligation to take ſteps to reclaim him, as if his treſpaſs were againſt one individual only. And if his ſin be not of a private, but of a public nature, and is known to many, or to all, this is no reaſon why every perſon ſhould not feel the treſpaſs againſt him, and be ready

* Matth. xviii. 15, 16, 17.

† The word in the original αμαρτηση tranſlated *treſpaſs*, is the word which is uſed for *ſinning*. It is ſo tranſlated in the 21ſt verſe. "How often ſhall my brother *ſin* againſt me, and I forgive him?" And it is ſo tranſlated in the following paſſage: "But when ye *ſin* ſo againſt the brethren, and wound their weak conſcience, ye ſin againſt Chriſt." 1 Cor. viii. 12. And it is to be obſerved, that by ſinning againſt the brethren, he does not mean any particular perſonal injury or offence.

ready to take proper ſteps to bring him to repentance, and be the firſt to apply to him to that end, unleſs particular circumſtances render it more proper and convenient for ſome other perſon to do it.

And however public the offence may be, every individual ought to be diſpoſed to make private application to him firſt, unleſs ſome other perſon ſhall do it, before he ſpeaks of it to others; and to conſider this as neceſſary in order to obey the command of Chriſt, and the law of love, which ought to govern, in every ſtep taken in ſuch a caſe. Perhaps the perſon offending, does not view what he has done in a true light, or think himſelf guilty of unchriſtian conduct, or does not know that others are offended with him. And if he ſhould have his crime properly ſet before him in a private way, he might be made ſenſible of what he had done, and that he had given juſt offence, and voluntarily make chriſtian ſatisfaction by a public confeſſion, without any public accuſation, or proceſs before the church. If the brethren were all under the proper influence of chriſtian love, and felt that concern and tenderneſs towards an offending brother, which is the attendant of ſuch love, ſuch a method would doubtleſs appear moſt agreeable to them, and they would be ready to take it, whenever there is opportunity and a call to do it; and it will be peculiarly agreeable to them, to have a brother who has ſinned, reclaimed in ſuch a private and eaſy way. And it is preſumed there is no chriſtian who is a member of a church, who would not wiſh to be treated in this manner, if he ſhould in any inſtance, give offence to any or all of his brethren; and who would not think it a privilege to be in union with brethren who would deal thus privately and tenderly with him, whenever he ſhould give them any juſt, or ſuppoſed ground of offence: And therefore if he ſhould neglect to take this method

with any of his brethren who ſhould give offence to him, he would not do to him, as he would deſire others to do to himſelf, and ſo tranſgreſs the law of love, and this wiſe law of Chriſt, which commands chriſtians to endeavour to heal every offence, in the moſt private, eaſy and tender manner. It may be the ſuppoſed offender will ſatisfy his offended brother, that he is innocent, and has really given no ground of offence. But if he be not able to do this, and be not made ſenſible of his fault, and ſo do not hear his brother, he muſt take one or two of his brethren, whom he thinks moſt likely to convince and gain the offender; as this is moſt agreeable to chriſtian love, and beſt ſuited to anſwer the end. If they, when they have heard and conſidered the caſe, judge there is juſt ground of offence, and do convince the offender of it, and perſuade him to make chriſtian ſatisfaction, the faulty brother is gained. If they judge that there is no ſufficient ground of offence, or no proper evidence of the fact with which he is charged, the matter cannot be carried any farther, and laid before the church. If they think there is juſt ground of offence and evidence of the fact of which he is accuſed; but cannot convince the offender of it; and therefore judge it ought to be laid before the church; the way is prepared to bring a complaint to the church, which ought to be received when it comes to them by the approbation of two or three, and not otherwiſe. And thus, "By the mouth of two or three witneſſes every word is eſtabliſhed."—They are witneſſes which ought to have great weight with the perſon's conſcience with whom they deal, and which is ſuited to convince him, and bring him to his duty, if they condemn him. They are witneſſes to the church, that private methods have been taken to convince and reclaim him; that he will not hear them, and that he ought to be called to an account by the church.

And

And in this way, the church go on proper and ſafe ground in receiving a complaint againſt any of the members, and proceeding to call the accuſed perſon before them, in order to hear and judge of the matter of which he is accuſed. And there is a proper guard placed againſt accuſations being brought to the church by individuals, which might be wholly without any foundation, which would give needleſs trouble to the church, and might be very injurious to thoſe againſt whom the complaints are made.

On the whole, it will doubtleſs appear to all who well conſider the matter, that the rule our Saviour has given in the words under conſideration, extends to all inſtances of offences given by any profeſſing chriſtians; and that no perſon can, according to this, be called before the church to anſwer for any fault, whether private or public, unleſs a complaint be brought againſt him, in the way here preſcribed: And that the wiſdom and goodneſs of Chriſt appears in forming this ſhort and plain rule of proceeding in all ſuch caſes, which is perfectly agreeable to the law of *love*, and is in the beſt manner ſuited to promote the peace and edification of the church, and the good of every individual member: And conſequently every deviation from this rule, is contrary to the law of chriſtian benevolence, and tends to evil.*

* It has been ſuppoſed by ſome, that the direction in this paſſage to go to an offending brother, "and tell him his fault, between thee and him *alone*," is applicable to no caſe but ſuch wherein none knows of the fault of which the brother is guilty but the perſon who applies to him. But this cannot be true: For in ſuch a caſe he would not be able to prove to the church or any one, that his brother has been guilty of any fault; and therefore has no right to take one or two more to deal with him, or to ſpeak of it to any perſon in the world. It muſt remain a ſecret between him and his brother; and to tell it to others, would be a violation of the law of love, and a real ſlander; and would expoſe himſelf to ſuffer as a ſlanderer of his brother, having ſpread an evil report of him, which he cannot prove. Therefore, in the caſe of a treſpaſs mentioned by Chriſt in this paſſage, it is ſuppoſed that it can be proved by

IV. When the accuſed perſon is thus regularly brought before the church, if they judge he is cenſurable, and he remains impenitent, and will not hear them; or if he refuſe to appear and anſwer to the complaint, when deſired, he is to be rejected and caſt out of the church; and cannot be reſtored again, without a proper manifeſtation of repentance. This is expreſſed by Chriſt in the following words: "But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." That is, conſider and treat him, as you are accuſtomed to view and treat heathens and publicans.—The Apoſtle Paul expreſſes the ſame thing in the following words: "I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with ſuch an one, no not to eat."*—And to the ſame purpoſe he ſays again; "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye withdraw yourſelves from every brother that walketh diſorderly, and not after the tradition which ye received of us. And if any man obey not our word by this epiſtle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be aſhamed."† The Jews avoided the company of heathens and publicans, and did not eat their common meals with them. And in the above paſſage, Chriſt commands the members of his churches to

by other witneſſes than him who tells him his fault, or thoſe whom he takes with him in the ſecond ſtep; otherwiſe he cannot take ſuch a ſtep; and it is ſo ſecret that though he knew the fact to be true, he may not ſpeak of it to any one; and cannot be a matter of public diſcipline.

If it be aſked, What an offended brother can do in ſuch a caſe? The anſwer is plain and eaſy. He ought to deal with his faulty brother privately, and try to convince and awaken his conſcience, and bring him to repentance. But if he remain obſtinate, he muſt leave the matter in ſecret till the day of judgment, and continue to treat his brother before the world, and in the church, as viſibly in good ſtanding, and a viſible chriſtian, as he really is, whatever be the ſecret ſins of which he is guilty.

* 1 Cor. v. 11. † 2 Theſſ. iii. 6, 14.

to treat thoſe who will not hear the church, in the ſame manner. And the ſame thing is enjoined by St. Paul, when he commands the church at Corinth not to keep company with ſuch, *no not to eat.* He tells them he did not forbid their keeping company with the wicked men of the world; for this would be inconſiſtent with their living in the world. But if he, who had the name of a chriſtian brother, tranſgreſſed the rules of Chriſt, and fell from his profeſſion, they ſhould renounce him, and not only exclude him from the privileges of a viſible chriſtian in the church; but treat him with peculiar neglect and ſlight, and avoid his company at all times, and never ſo much as eat with him at a common table: as ſuited to keep in his view his character and ſituation in the ſight of chriſtians, and to excite thoſe feelings, and that ſhame, which tended to bring him to repentance.

Such a treatment of an excommunicated perſon, is proper, and neceſſary, in order to anſwer the ends of the cenſures of the church, ſo as to have their deſired effect. By this their authority is exerciſed, maintained and kept in view, and their particular abhorrence of the character and conduct of the cenſured perſon, is conſtantly expreſſed to him, and to the world; and the diſtinction between him and thoſe who are in good ſtanding, and his awful ſituation, is made manifeſt in all their conduct towards him: And it is ſuited conſtantly to affect and impreſs his mind, to give him uneaſineſs in his ſituation, to make him aſhamed, and bring him to repentance.—Thus the ſalutary ends of the cenſures of the church, are in this way anſwered, both with reſpect to the church, the excommunicated perſon, and the world.

VII. THE brother who commits a fault, by which he falls under the cenſure of the church, may be reſtored

to good ſtanding again, by reformation, a public confeſſion, and profeſſion of repentance, and not without this.

Some have thought that a confeſſion before the church only, is ſufficient in order to a perſon's being reſtored to good ſtanding; and that this is all that can be reaſonably required. But it ought to be conſidered, that the church is a public ſociety, a city ſet on a hill, which cannot be hid; and their light is to ſhine before others. When a chriſtian falls from his profeſſion in his conduct, he puts out his light *before others*, as well as in the ſight of the church, and cannot recover it, and cauſe it to ſhine again, but by a profeſſion of repentance, and condemnation of himſelf, before them, or in their ſight. And a true penitent will deſire to do this before all to whom the knowledge of his crime may have come, and wiſh all may know that he does repent. A contrary diſpoſition to this, is found only in the impenitent.

VIII. IT is to be obſerved, that Jeſus Chriſt has not given to his church any authority to inflict any corporal puniſhment on men for diſobedience to his laws; to impriſon or fine them, or ſubject them to any worldly inconvenience, except what is implied in caſting them out of the church, and treating them in the manner mentioned above.

All that has been done, of this kind, in the chriſtian world, by the profeſſed followers of Chriſt, has been an abuſe and violation of the laws of Chriſt, and has proceeded wholly from an antichriſtian ſpirit. The kingdom of Chriſt is in this reſpect, as well as others, *not of this world.*

IX. ON the whole, it is obſervable, that the prevalence of the ſpirit of chriſtian love, is neceſſary in order to the proper and uſeful practice of diſcipline in the churches

churches of Christ. Christ and his Apostles have insisted much on this, as that without which the laws of Christ cannot be obeyed in any degree. It is this alone by which the disciples and church of Christ are to be distinguished from the men and the societies of the world. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."* Where a spirit of true christian love prevails, it will be natural and easy to obey the laws of Christ respecting the discipline to be exercised in his church; it will appear important and necessary that these laws should be observed and executed with great care and strictness: And the good effect will be apparent. By this the church will edify itself in love, and become "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." And when this spirit of christian love is not in exercise, the proper practice of discipline will not take place; and all attempts to practice it will proceed from selfishness, pride and a worldly spirit, and promote confusion, divisions and contention, rather than peace and edification, which has been verified in too many instances.

* John xiii. 35.

CHAPTER VI.

On Chriſtian Practice.

EVERY doctrine which comes into the ſyſtem of truth, exhibited in divine revelation, and which has been brought into view, in the preceding work, is, in a greater or leſs degree practical; and the whole, conſidered in a collective view, do lead to, and involve every thing eſſential in the whole ſyſtem of chriſtian exerciſe and practice, which conſiſts wholly in practiſing the truth, or walking in the truth.* This will therefore ſerve as an help and guide in the brief delineation of this, which is now propoſed.

The temper and exerciſes of a chriſtian, which take place in the view of revealed truth, have been in ſome meaſure brought into view and deſcribed already. They conſiſt ſummarily and moſt eſſentially in *love*: In loving God with all their heart; and loving their neighbour as themſelves. Chriſtian practice, conſiſts in expreſſing, and acting out this affection, on all occaſions, in every ſuitable way, in obedience to all the holy laws of God. The chriſtian owes perfect obedience at all times, as he always did before he was a chriſtian, and which all men do. His becoming a chriſtian, and obtaining pardon and the divine favour, is ſo far from freeing him from obligation to obey the laws of God perfectly, that his obligation to this, are hereby greatly increaſed.

There is no real obedience, or any thing morally good or evil in mere words and external actions, conſidered as

* John iii. 21. 2 John 4. 3 John 3, 4.

as unconnected with the heart, and aſide from the motives and affections of which they are the fruit and expreſſion; for all obedience and virtue conſiſts in the diſpoſition and exerciſes of the heart; and in the expreſſions and exertions of it, in words and external actions: And when the latter are not the fruit and genuine expreſſions of the former, whatever they may be, there is no holineſs or moral good in them. And when they are the fruit and production of a wrong and ſinful diſpoſition, motives and exerciſes of heart, they are bad fruit, and conſidered in this connection are ſinful. This is expreſsly aſſerted by Chriſt: "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or elſe make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt. A good man, out of the good treaſure of his heart, bringeth forth good things: And an evil man, out of the evil treaſure, bringeth forth evil things."* The external appearances and expreſſions, in words and conduct, of both of them, in ſome, yea many inſtances, may be the ſame, or ſo much alike, in the view of man, as not to be diſtinguiſhed. But thoſe of the one are good, as they proceed from a good heart, and are the proper expreſſion of his true benevolence and goodneſs. Thoſe of the other are evil, as they proceed from an evil heart, and are the fruit and effect of ſelfiſh motives, or of ſelf-love; and all the appearance they have of the contrary, is nothing but falſehood and hypocriſy.

Mankind in their ſtate of depravity and blindneſs, are liable to make great miſtakes, not only with reſpect to real holineſs of heart, in what it conſiſts; but as to the way and manner in which an honeſt and good heart is to be expreſſed in words and actions; and therefore ſtand in need of particular inſtruction and direction with regard to this. God has been pleaſed to furniſh man with direction, in the revelation which he has given, and has abundantly taught us how, and in what manner we are to

* Matth. xii. 33, 35.

to expreſs that love, in which all holineſs conſiſts, and what are the natural effects of it, in words and actions, on different occaſions, and towards different objects. This is done more ſummarily in the ten commandments ſpoken from Mount Sinai by God himſelf, in the audience of all the people of Iſrael, and afterwards written by him on two tables of ſtone. But this is more particularly taught and explained, by numerous precepts reſpecting our conduct on various occaſions, and towards different objects and perſons; and by the hiſtory and example of good men; and eſpecially by the precepts and example of Chriſt.

By theſe, the conduct which is a proper expreſſion of love to God and to our neighbour, including ourſelves, is ſo particularly delineated, that they who are under the influence of this love, are not expoſed to make any great miſtakes; but will be directed and excited to all chriſtian practice, in each branch of it.

I. CHRISTIAN practice, as it more immediately reſpects God, and the things of the inviſible world, which is the practice of piety, conſiſts chiefly in the following things:

1. A public profeſſion of a belief of the great, important truths and doctrines, contained in divine revelation, and ſincere approbation of them; a profeſſion of repentance and faith in Jeſus Chriſt; and that we do dedicate and devote ourſelves to his ſervice, ſubmitting to him as our Lord and Saviour; promiſing to obey all his commands, and attend upon all his ordinances: At the ſame time, profeſſing love to the viſible diſciples of Chriſt, and a deſire to join to a ſociety of ſuch, who are mutually engaged to promote the cauſe and kingdom of Chriſt in the world, and maintain his worſhip and ordinances, in a way which is agreeable to our judgment,

and

and conſcience. Such a public profeſſion is due to God, and no man can properly honour Chriſt without it; and is therefore the natural expreſſion of love to God, and the ſpirit of true piety. This therefore has been required and practiſed in all ages, under the Old Teſtament and the New, as the only way in which a viſible church has exiſted in the world, or can exiſt. This is expreſſed in ſcripture in the following words: "Ye ſtand this day all of you, before the Lord your God; that thou ſhouldſt enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day."* "I will pour my ſpirit upon thy ſeed, and my bleſſing upon thine offspring. And they ſhall ſpring up as among graſs, as willows by water courſes. One ſhall ſay, I am the Lord's; and another ſhall call himſelf by the name of Jacob: And another ſhall ſubſcribe with his hand unto the Lord, and ſirname himſelf by the name of Iſrael."† "Then they that gladly received the word, were baptized: And the ſame day there were added unto them, about three thouſand ſouls. And the Lord *added to the church* daily, ſuch as ſhould be ſaved. And believers were the more *added to the Lord*, multitudes, both men and women. And much people was added unto the Lord. And he anſwered and ſaid, I believe that Jeſus is the ſon of God."‡ "He that believeth and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved."§ Baptiſm, neceſſarily implies ſuch a profeſſion, and an expreſs engagement to obey and ſerve Jeſus Chriſt.

2. If a perſon has not been baptized in his infancy, a ſubmiſſion to this commanded right is required of him, as a chriſtian, without which no profeſſion of faith and obedience to Chriſt, is to be conſidered as credible, or can conſtitute him a viſible chriſtian. If he has been baptized in his infancy, and ſo made a viſible member of the

* Deut. xxix. 10, 12. † Iſaiah xliv. 3, 4, 5.

‡ Acts ii. 41, 47. v. 14. viii. 37. xi. 24. § Mark xvi. 16.

the church, in the ſenſe explained above, his approbation of this, and of all that is implied in it, muſt be expreſsly or implicitly declared in the public profeſſion which he makes. And when ſuch a profeſſor who is baptized, and a viſible member of a church, has children, he is required to offer and dedicate them to Chriſt in baptiſm, and promiſe to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This, and his faithful performance of his engagements in this tranſaction, is an important part of the practice of piety, and the duty which he owes to Chriſt, which at the ſame time is a duty which he owes to his children, and to the church.

3. A ſerious, devout, and conſtant attendance on all the religious inſtitutions of Jeſus Chriſt, is an important part of chriſtian practice. Theſe are public worſhip; conſiſting in prayer, ſinging praiſe to God, and hearing the word preached. Attending on the Lord's ſupper, whenever it is adminiſtred in the church to which he belongs. A careful and ſtrict obſervation of the chriſtian Sabbath, in abſtaining from all ſecular buſineſs, labour or recreation; except that which is of real neceſſity; and works of charity and mercy; and devoting the whole day to religious exerciſes, in public and more privately. This is an important part of the practice of chriſtian piety; and every branch of the chriſtian's exerciſe of piety, will commonly keep pace with his obſervation of the Sabbath. If a chriſtian feels in any good meaſure as he ought to do, this will be a high day with him, as in a peculiar manner conſecrated to the honour and ſervice of Chriſt. He is ready to welcome it, on every return of it, with peculiar ſatisfaction and joy; and be concerned to order his worldly circumſtances and buſineſs, ſo as to have the leaſt poſſible interruption, in the duties of the Sabbath. Thus he will turn away his foot from the Sabbath, from doing his worldly pleaſure on God's holy

day;

day; and will call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, and honourable; and will conſcientiouſly honour him, not doing his own ways, nor finding his own pleaſure, nor ſpeaking his own words.*

4. A free and cheerful contribution for the ſupport of the goſpel and public religion, according to his ability and opportunity, is a neceſſary part of the practice of a chriſtian. This cannot be maintained and ſupported, according to the inſtitution of Chriſt, without coſt and expenſe, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt has ordained, that they who preach the goſpel, ſhould live of the goſpel.† Love to God, and divine inſtitutions, and a regard for the honour of Chriſt, will open the heart of a chriſtian; and he will be ready to contribute liberally for the ſupport of the goſpel, and will much rather retrench his expenſes in other things, than fall ſhort of his duty in this, which he will conſider as a privilege, rather than a burden. And it is the duty of every chriſtian, to make all thoſe exertions, and be at all the expenſe, which may be neceſſary to ſpread and propagate the goſpel, to thoſe who have not enjoyed it, according to his opportunity, capacity and ability, to promote ſuch an important deſign.

5. A ſerious, pious manner of converſation, which is the proper effect and expreſſion of a belief of the great truths of chriſtianity, and a ſenſe of their importance and excellence; being ready to ſpeak and hear of the things of religion on all proper occaſions; ſpeaking of God, his works, and ways, and inſtitutions, and the things of the inviſible, eternal world, as being realities, and with becoming reverence and ſolemnity; and carefully avoiding all vain, trifling converſation. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the uſe of edifying, that it may miniſter grace unto the hearers."‡

6. The

* Iſaiah lviii. 13. † 1 Cor. ix. 14. ‡ Eph. iv. 29.

6. The chriſtian ought to give great and conſtant attention to his Bible, reading and ſtudying it daily, that he may know what is the will of God there revealed, and underſtand the important truths it contains, and that they may be more and more impreſſed on his mind, and be plain and familiar to him. "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night."* And he will be diſpoſed to improve all the advantages and helps which are in his reach to underſtand the ſcriptures, and make advances in divine knowledge, both by reading the writings of thoſe who have explained the ſcriptures, and inculcated the doctrines and duties of chriſtianity; and by converſation with thoſe from whom he may hope to get inſtruction. In this, and in his devotions, he ſpends all the time which can be ſpared from his particular worldly buſineſs and calling, and for which the Sabbath gives him ſpecial advantages.

7. The pious education of children, and of all who are under his care, is a duty comprehended in the practice of piety. This conſiſts in family government, and giving them religious inſtruction, at all proper opportunities, and in adviſing, exhorting and admoniſhing them, reſpecting their religious exerciſes and conduct. This was ſtrictly enjoined on the children of Iſrael, as has been particularly obſerved in a former chapter; and is implied in St. Paul's direction to chriſtian parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

8. Prayer, or devotion, is a great and important branch of chriſtian exerciſe and practice, and is the conſtant employ of a pious heart, and eſſential to true chriſtianity. This comprehends, adoration, confeſſion, petition, thankſgiving and praiſe; of all which God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, is the immediate object. Adoration

* Pſal. i. 2.

tion conſiſts in thinking and ſpeaking of the divine perfections, character and works, in devout addreſſes to Him. And as this is to be done with veneration, and a ſenſe and acknowledgment of the divine worthineſs, excellence, and glory, conſiſting and appearing in theſe, which is praiſe: Therefore, adoration and praiſe are not to be diſtinguiſhed, as to be conſidered diſtinct and ſeparate from each other. Confeſſion conſiſts in an acknowledgment made to God of our ſins, unworthineſs, guilt and miſery; and of our abſolute dependance on God for every good. And profeſſion may be conſidered as implied in this, of repentance, and dependance on God for pardon and all the good we want, in a belief and approbation of the truths contained in divine revelation. Petition, is making requeſt to God, and aſking for the good things which we want and deſire for ourſelves, or others, or for any good which appears to us deſirable, and not contrary to the revealed will of God to grant or do. Which petitions are always to be made with an unreſerved, abſolute reſignation to the will of God. Thankſgiving conſiſts in expreſſing our gratitude to God, for all the expreſſions and exerciſes of his benevolence, which come within our view: For benevolence or goodneſs expreſſed, is the only object or ground of true gratitude, wherever it appears, and whoever be the ſubjects of it; and however it may be abuſed and perverted by individuals, and turned into the greateſt evil to them.

Prayer, taken in this large ſenſe, as comprehending all this, even the whole that is implied in addreſſing God, and holding intercourſe with him, in ſecret, private or public, is much ſpoken of in ſcripture, and recommended by many precepts, and examples of pious men, and of Jeſus Chriſt himſelf. He ſpake a parable to ſhow, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint, and to encourage them to do it.* And we are commanded, in

every

* Luke xviii. 1, &c.

every thing, by prayer and ſupplication, with thankſgiving, to let our requeſts be made known to God. "To pray without ceaſing: To pray always, with all prayer and ſupplication in the ſpirit, watching thereunto with all perſeverance." And the greateſt motives and encouragement to prayer that are poſſible, are exhibited in divine revelation, both by precept, example and promiſes; of which every one muſt be ſenſible, who is well acquainted with the Bible. It is therefore thought needleſs to go into particulars to prove or illuſtrate this.

The chriſtian is always near the throne of grace. God repreſents his ear as always open to the cry of them who look to him, and truſt in him. The Mediator has opened the way of acceſs to God, for ſinners, and bid them aſk all good things in his name; and promiſes that they ſhall be heard, and have their petitions granted. Therefore, we may have free acceſs to God, on all occaſions, and at all times, and we may pray always, with all prayer; and this is both the duty and intereſt of a chriſtian. Where ever he is, whatever be his circumſtances and buſineſs, his heart may riſe to God in any part of devotion, petition, thankſgiving, praiſe, &c. in deſultory ejaculations, and he pour out his heart before God, in groanings which cannot be uttered in words. With this ſort of prayer, every chriſtian is acquainted; and the higher he riſes in the exerciſe of chriſtianity, the more he practiſes it.

Set times of ſecret prayer alſo, come into the practice of a chriſtian; when he retires from the world, and out of the ſight of men, and ſummonſes his heart to attention to the worſhip of God in ſecret. Of this particular kind of prayer, Chriſt ſpeaks in the following words: "But thou, when thou prayeſt, enter into thy cloſet, and when thou haſt ſhut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in ſecret, and thy Father who ſeeth in ſecret, ſhall reward thee openly."* It is plain, that Chriſt ſpeaks here

* Matth. vi, 6.

here of perſonal prayer, in diſtinction from that which is ſocial. No chriſtian can live comfortably, or as he ought, without the daily practice of this ſort of prayer. It is ſuited to keep religion alive in his heart. He has many wants and particular concerns between God and his ſoul, which cannot be expreſſed in ſocial worſhip, which it is highly proper and greatly beneficial for him to expreſs before God in ſecret, where he may do it with unreſtrained freedom.

Social prayer is alſo a duty, in which chriſtians join with each other in worſhipping God, in a greater or leſs number, more publicly or leſs, according to their particular connections, and ſpecial occaſions. It is highly proper, and greatly beneficial, that each family ſhould practiſe ſocial worſhip together, and as a family daily, and in a conſtant, uninterrupted courſe. They have many family wants, mercies and afflictions, which are changing, and may be renewed from day to day, and which call for particular acknowledgment, confeſſions and petitions, which cannot be ſo properly made in any other way, but by the family uniting together, morning and evening, in ſocial worſhip. And this, when properly practiſed, tends to keep up a view and ſenſe of the things of religion, in the members of the family, and to ſolemnize and quicken all of them. And it cannot be conceived how parents and heads of families can properly educate their children, and thoſe of whom they have the care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and treat them in the beſt manner that tends to form them to piety and religion, if they do not pray daily with them and for them, in this ſocial way; joining the ſerious reading of the ſcriptures with their devotions.*

A

* Devout ſinging in families, ſeems to be a proper part of family worſhip. It has been, and now is, practiſed by many devout families. Chriſtians are directed to ſing pſalms and hymns; and they doubtleſs did it in their families, as well as more publicly. They taught and admoniſhed one another in pſalms

A number of inſtances of our Saviour's praying with his diſciples, which were his family, are mentioned; and there is no reaſon to think theſe were the only inſtances; but they are ſo related, that it is reaſonable to conclude, that this was his conſtant practice.* The Apoſtle Paul, when he preſents ſalvation to chriſtians, frequently mentions and ſalutes the churches in their houſes, by which he means the members of chriſtian families. They are *little churches*, when they unite in daily worſhip, and reading the holy ſcriptures; and proper inſtruction, order and diſcipline are maintained: And are little nurſeries, from whence more large and extenſive churches are ſupplied and ſupported. But the families, in which there is no religious worſhip practiſed, make a contrary appearance, and have a contrary tendency, even to demoliſh the church and root out religion; and are too commonly the places of irreligion and vice.

It is alſo agreeable to the nature and dictates of the chriſtian religion, that perſons of different ages and ſexes, ſhould unite and form themſelves into different ſocieties, and meet together at times and places upon which they ſhall agree, as moſt convenient for prayer and religious converſation, or reading the word of God, or books ſuited

pſalms and hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs, ſinging with grace in their hearts to the Lord. Col. iii. 16. Paul and Silas prayed, and ſang praiſes unto God, when only they two worſhipped together in priſon. Where this is wholly neglected in families, their worſhip appears to be defective. And doubtleſs, when religion ſhall appear in the true ſpirit and luſtre of it in families, ſinging in a ſweet, harmonious manner, will be one part of their daily worſhip. It is owing to a defect in the education of children, that they are not all taught to ſing when young. If proper attention were paid to this, there would be but few, if any, unable to ſing ſo as to add to the muſic and harmony. And children would be trained up in families, ſo as to be able to join with others in this part of public worſhip, and render it more univerſal, beautiful and melodious, and more becoming a chriſtian, worſhipping aſſembly. In the millennium, children will ſing Hoſannas to the Son of David, not only in public, but in families, when all will join with one heart, and one mouth, to ſing praiſes unto God.

* Luke ix. 18; 28. xi. 1.

ed to inſtruct and excite them to their duty. This tends to promote religion, to keep up a ſenſe of it on the mind, and to unite the hearts of chriſtians one to another, and direct and quicken them in relative duties. Thus young men may form themſelves into a ſociety, to meet frequently for thoſe purpoſes; and young women, by themſelves. And elderly men by themſelves, and women apart by themſelves. Or ſocieties of males in general, older and younger, may meet by themſelves, and females of every age apart in a diſtinct ſociety: Or both males and females may meet together in different neighbourhoods, when it can be done under proper regulations, and may be found moſt convenient. It is eaſy to ſee that ſuch ſocieties, under good regulations, tend to promote religion, union and good order among chriſtians. And it has been found by experience, that revivals of religion have actually produced this effect, and led people to form into praying ſocieties of this kind; which, when properly conducted, have proved ſalutary and profitable.

The prayers and devotions of public worſhip, are to be conſtantly attended with a ſerious and decent behaviour, ſo as not to diſturb, but promote and aſſiſt others, in this part of public, ſolemn devotion. The conſtant practice of ſecret, family, and other ſocial prayer, which has now been mentioned, is ſuited to prepare for this more public and ſolemn worſhip. "Keep thy foot when thou goeſt to the houſe of God, and be more ready to hear, than to offer the ſacrifice of fools."* "Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my houſe of prayer: For mine houſe ſhall be called an houſe of prayer for all people."† "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple, at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour."‡ "And the inhabitants of one city ſhall go to another, ſaying, Let us go ſpeedily *to pray before the Lord*, and to ſeek the Lord of

 hoſts:

* Eccl. v. 1. † Iſai. lvi. 7. ‡ Acts iii. 1.

hoſts: I will go alſo. Yea, many people and ſtrong nations ſhall come to ſeek the Lord of hoſts in Jeruſalem, and *to pray before the Lord.*"*

9. Faſting is to be joined with prayer, at certain times, and on ſpecial occaſions. Religious faſting conſiſts in abſtinence from common food and drink, for a certain time, longer or ſhorter, as ſhall be found moſt convenient, and beſt ſuited to anſwer the ends of faſting, which are to promote and expreſs engagedneſs of mind in prayer and devotion; eſpecially to expreſs humiliation, contrition, and concern of mind, and a readineſs to crucify the fleſh, with the affections and luſts, and mortify the body. This is to be practiſed, eſpecially when under any particular and great calamity, ſpiritual or temporal; or when ſuch calamity is threatened, and perſons ſet themſelves to ſeek of God deliverance from the evil that is upon them, or that the threatened evil may be averted. Alſo, when any great and ſpecial mercy is to be ſought, it is proper to do it with faſting and prayer. This is a commanded duty; and there are many inſtances of it, as practiſed by pious perſons, both in the Old and in the New Teſtament. There are many inſtances of perſonal faſting recorded in ſcripture, which is to be performed by ſingle perſons, and is to be done as ſecretly as circumſtances will permit. Of this perſonal faſting Chriſt ſpeaks, when he ſays, "But thou, when thou faſteſt, anoint thine head, and waſh thy face; that thou appear not unto men to faſt, but unto thy Father which is in ſecret: And thy Father, which ſeeth in ſecret, ſhall reward thee openly."† Social faſting and prayer, is alſo a duty, in the practice of which particular families have ſometimes a call to join; and more public ſocieties, or whole churches, as the duty may be pointed out in divine providence. Our Saviour ſuppoſes it will frequently be the duty for chriſtians to faſt, and implicitly, at

* Zech. viii. 21, 22. † Matth. vi. 17, 18.

at leaſt, enjoins it, when he ſays of them, "The days will come, when the bridegroom ſhall be taken from them, and then ſhall they faſt."*

Before this account of the devotion which is eſſential to the practice of chriſtians, is diſmiſſed; it will be proper to conſider the following queſtion.

QUESTION. IT is granted, that the ſcripture reveals an omniſcient and unchangeable God: And at the ſame time, directs and commands men to pray. But how theſe are conſiſtent, is not ſo readily ſeen. What encouragement or reaſon can there be to pray to an omniſcient and unchangeable God?

ANSWER 1. If there were no omniſcient, unchangeable God, there could be no juſt ground, or reaſon for prayer. On this ſuppoſition, there would be no God; for none but an omniſcient and unchangeable Being can be God. But if this were poſſible, and God were changeable, there would be no reaſon to truſt in him for any thing; becauſe what he would be diſpoſed to do, and whether he would grant any petition made to him, or fulfil any of his promiſes, would be utterly uncertain; and therefore, there would be no ground and encouragement for prayer. But if there could be any encouragement to pray to a changeable Being, and we knew he was able to grant, and would give whatever we aſked of him, and do as we deſired, it would be the greateſt preſumption to aſk him for any thing, unleſs we knew it was for our own good, and for the general good, to have it granted; and ſo might ſet ourſelves up as judges, directors, and governours of the univerſe. Therefore, the truly humble, pious perſon, would not dare to pray for any thing, if God were not omniſcient and unchangeable. Hence it follows, that if there be any reaſon and

* Matth. ix. 15.

encouragement to pray at all, it muſt be, becauſe God is omniſcient and unchangeable. The truly pious do not ſet up their own will, or deſire any petition which they make ſhould be granted, unleſs it be conſiſtent with the infinitely wiſe, good and unchangeable will of God.—To this, they refer all, and in this they truſt, with the moſt pleaſing confidence, and ſay implicitly or expreſsly, in all their petitions, "If it be conſiſtent with thy unchangeable, wiſe and holy will: Not our will, but thine be done, whatever it may be." Any petition which is put up with a diſpoſition contrary to this, is an act of impiety, and enmity againſt God.

ANSWER 2. There is good reaſon, and all deſirable or poſſible encouragement to pray to an omniſcient, unchangeable God. For,

1. It is reaſonable and proper that the pious ſhould expreſs their wants and deſires to God, and their dependence on him, and truſt in him for the ſupply of their wants. If they have ſuch wants and ſuch deſires; and feel their dependence on God for a ſupply, and truſt in him alone, and ſuch feeling and deſires be right and proper, it muſt be reaſonable and proper that they ſhould be expreſſed. And indeed, the very exiſtence and exerciſe of ſuch feelings and deſires, are a kind and degree of expreſſion of them before God, and therefore the expreſſion of them is eſſential to their exiſtence: And the more clear, ſtrong and particular the expreſſion of them is, the more properly and the better do they exiſt. But theſe are expreſſed in the moſt natural and beſt manner in prayer. It appears from what has been now obſerved, that ſuch feelings and deſires are themſelves a ſort of mental prayer; and it is therefore too late not to pray, when they exiſt. And the more particularly and diſtinctly, and with the greater ſtrength

they

they are acted out and expreſſed in thoughts and words, in particular and ſolemn addreſſes to God, the more reaſonable and proper are theſe exerciſes of the mind. Beſides, this is the only way in which pious chriſtians in this world, can, not only expreſs their piety in the moſt proper manner; but alſo pay proper acknowledgments to God, and give him the honour due to his name.

2. Aſking God for the favours they want, is ſuited to prepare them to receive them, and fit them for the mercy he deſigns to beſtow upon them, ſo as to render it the greater and better to them. Though God be unchangeable, the chriſtian ſtands in need of being changed; the change is therefore to take place in him. And nothing can be more ſuited to prepare the chriſtian to receive good things, than a proper aſking for them, and the views and exerciſes implied in this. The expreſſing our wants and our deſires to God, in a particular and ſolemn application to him; and our dependence on him for help, and truſt in him, and our conviction and ſenſe of his ſufficiency for us, tends greatly to ſtrengthen theſe views, feelings and exerciſes of the heart, and to excite and maintain the conſtant exerciſe of them; and to form the mind more and more to a preparedneſs to receive them, as a free gift from God, and to render the bleſſings which are aſked, more ſweet, and of greater worth to the ſoul. In this view, the reaſonableneſs of prayer, and the great encouragement to practiſe it, are evident.

3. From the foregoing, it appears, that prayer is a real, proper and neceſſary mean of obtaining and receiving bleſſings from God; and as much ſo, as if he were not omniſcient and unchangeable. Though God has determined to beſtow bleſſings on men, this does not exclude the means by which they are to be received, but neceſſarily ſuppoſes and includes them; and prayer

is one of them. Therefore, when God had declared by the Prophet Ezekiel, what bleſſings he determined to beſtow on his church and people, he nevertheleſs ſaid, "I will yet for this be enquired of by the houſe of Iſrael, to do it for them."*

4. Hence it appears, that God hears the prayers of his people, and regards them as much, and as really anſwers them, and they receive bleſſings as really and as much by this mean, and in anſwer to them, as if he were not unchangeable. Therefore, there is as much reaſon and as great encouragement to pray, as if he were changeable: Yea, and much more; for it has been ſhown, that if he were not unchangeable, there could be no ſafety in truſting in him, or encouragement to pray to him.

5. The ſatisfaction and pleaſure that is to be enjoyed by the chriſtian in prayer and devotion, is a ſufficient reaſon for it, and encouragement to practiſe it, if there were no other. This is not performed by the pious chriſtian as a taſk and burdenſome duty; but as a privilege and high enjoyment. The benevolent friends of God, have great ſupport, enjoyment and happineſs in caſting all their care upon Him, and expreſſing the deſires of their heart to him; and "by prayer and ſupplication, with thankſgiving, making known their requeſts to him. They would pray, were it only for the enjoyment which they have in exerciſe, and ſay in their hearts, "I will call upon God as long as I live;" While others reſtrain prayer before God, and ſay, "What is the Almighty, that we ſhould ſerve him? And what profit ſhould we have, if we pray unto him? They are pleaſed with the way which is opened for ſinners acceſs to God by an infinitely worthy Mediator, and admire the divine condeſcenſion and grace in this. And though they be certain that God is unchangeable, this does not tend to

* Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

prevent,

prevent, or in the leaſt abate the pleaſure and enjoyment they have in making known their requeſts to God, or their deſire conſtantly to practiſe it; but this truth gives them ſupport and conſolation, and increaſes their delight in calling upon God: And were not God unchangeable, they would ſee no reaſon, nor feel any encouragement to pray unto him, or even *dare* to aſk any thing of him, as has been obſerved.

II. CHRISTIAN practice conſiſts in part, in a proper conduct towards our fellow men, or in that conduct of which our neighbour is the more immediate object; and is employed in relative and ſocial duties. And this conſiſts wholly in obeying the law of love; in loving our neighbour as ourſelves, and in expreſſing and acting out this love, in the moſt natural and proper manner, in words and actions, on all occaſions, and at all times.—All this is comprized in the two following particulars.

1. In doing juſtice to all with whom we have any concern and connection: In giving to every one what is his due, what he has a right to from us; which is oppoſed to every inſtance and the leaſt degree of diſhoneſty and injuſtice, whereby any perſon is injured by words or actions, in any of his intereſts, in his name, eſtate or perſon. The leaſt violation of the rights of any perſon, by taking, or withholding from him any thing which is his due, and to which he has a right, is contrary to that comprehenſive precept of Chriſt, of which every rational man cannot but approve in his conſcience. "As ye would that men ſhould do to you, do ye alſo to them likewiſe."*

2. Benevolence is expreſſed and acted out farther, in doing good to all men, and promoting their true intereſt and happineſs, as far as we have opportunity, or according to our capacity, and the advantages we have to do it.

This

* Luke vi. 31.

This is neceſſarily included in loving our neighbour as ourſelves; and in doing to others, as we would they ſhould do unto us: And is expreſsly commanded in the following words: "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men."*

Theſe two generals comprehend a great number of particulars, ſome of which muſt be mentioned.

1. Speaking the truth in all caſes, and at all times, in oppoſition to every inſtance and degree of falſehood, and deceiving our neighbour. This includes a punctual fulfilment of all covenants and promiſes we make with men; and the careful and exact payment of all juſt debts; honeſty and uprightneſs in all our dealings with our neighbour; taking no advantage of his weakneſs, ignorance or neceſſity, and dependence on us. And we are not only to be concerned to conduct honeſtly; but to take ſpecial care and pains to appear in the view of others to do ſo, and guard to our utmoſt againſt all contrary appearance. Our love to Chriſt, to our neighbour, and ourſelves, will lead to this; and it is commanded by the Apoſtle Paul. He directs chriſtians, "To provide for things honeſt *in the ſight of all men.*"† And this he ſays he took care to do himſelf, "Providing for honeſt things, not only in the ſight of the Lord, but alſo *in the ſight of men.*"‡

2. Taking great care and pains, and doing their utmoſt to live in peace with all men; and to preſerve or make peace between others with whom they have any influence and connection as far as this is poſſible, conſiſtent with truth and duty. Chriſtians live in peace with all men as far as is poſſible, and are peace makers, ſo far as is in their power, and are diſpoſed, when it is conſiſtent with truth and duty, to give up their own right and intereſt, for the ſake of peace. They are concern-

ed,

* Gal. vi. 10. † Rom. xii. 17. ‡ 2 Cor. viii. 21.

ed, and ſtudy and endeavour to "Give no offence, neither to Jews nor Gentiles, nor to the church of God. But to pleaſe all men, in all things, not ſeeking their own profit, but the profit of many."*

3. Giving all the aſſiſtance and relief in their power to others who are ſuffering under temporal bodily wants and diſtreſſes; being diſpoſed to do good, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate, and miniſter to the help and comfort of others, as far as they have ability and opportunity.† "Whoſo hath this world's good, and ſeeth his brother have need, and ſhutteth up his bowels of compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"‡

4. As chriſtian benevolence ſeeks the greateſt good and happineſs to all, ſo far as is conſiſtent with the greateſt general good; and conſiders man as capable of infinitely better and greater good, than any carnal or worldly comfort and happineſs; and views him as infinitely miſerable, unleſs he be renewed, and ſaved by Jeſus Chriſt; the chriſtian is diſpoſed to do all in his power to prevent the eternal deſtruction of men, and promote their ſalvation, by their becoming real chriſtians. In this view he attempts, according to his ability, opportunity, and ſtation in life, and connection with others, to inſtruct the ignorant, convince and reclaim the erroneous, reform the vicious, and awaken the attention of all to the great truths and important duties of chriſtianity, "If by any means he may ſave ſome." And he exerciſes a conſtant care and watchfulneſs with reſpect to all his words and conduct before others, not to ſay or do any thing which would tend to prejudice them againſt true religion, or be any way injurious to their ſouls; but on the contrary, to ſpeak and act ſo, on all occaſions, as ſhall tend to remove prejudices againſt the truths and ways of Chriſt, and lead them cordially to

* 1 Cor. x. 32, 33. † 1 Tim. vi. 18. ‡ 1 Joh. iii. 17.

to embrace the goſpel; and to cauſe his light ſo to ſhine before men, that they may ſee his good works, and glorify his Father which is in heaven.* In this there is the exerciſe both of piety and humanity.

5. As chriſtianity forms the true chriſtian to a tender concern both for the temporal and eternal intereſt of all, and aims to conduct ſo as not to hurt it in any reſpect, but to promote it; ſo he is particularly tender of the character of others, and careful not to injure it, by backbiting, ſpeaking evil of them, and ſlandering them. And this requires the more care and reſolution, as the contrary is ſo common among men, and even many profeſſing chriſtians; and as the tongue cannot be properly bridled with reſpect to this, without conſtant care and watchfulneſs. Chriſtianity forbids all ſlander, backbiting and ſpeaking evil of others, as this is directly contrary to that charity or benevolence which is eſſential to a true chriſtian. Therefore, he carefully avoids the practice of ſlander and ſpeaking evil of others, in the following inſtances:

Firſt. He does not make or ſpread an evil report of others, which is not true; or which magnifies the faults of which they may be guilty, and repreſents them worſe than they really are. This he avoids, as contrary to truth, and the higheſt kind of ſlander. He will not only, not make a falſe report, and ſpread it; but will not *take up* an evil report concerning others, and ſpread it; merely becauſe he has heard it aſſerted by others, while he has no certain evidence of the truth of it. For this is contrary to the law of love, and real ſlander, however commonly it may be practiſed by men.

Secondly. He will not ſpeak of the evil conduct of any perſon, of which he knows him to be guilty, or divulge that to any one whomſoever, which is known to no one but himſelf, and the perſon who is guilty, and which

* Matth. v. 16.

which therefore he cannot prove to be true. For this is contrary to loving our neighbour as ourſelves; and is real ſlander. If we ourſelves ſhould be guilty of any action which is very wrong and odious, we ſhould not be diſpoſed to ſpeak of it to others, or if we ſhould do it, it would be wrong, and an addition to our crime. And though it ſhould be done in the view of ſome one perſon, he would have no right to diſcover it to any one elſe; but is obliged to keep it an inviolable ſecret in his own breaſt, as he cannot ſpeak of it to any other perſon, conſiſtent with loving his neighbour as himſelf. And if he do ſpeak of it, and ſpread this evil report of his neighbour, of the truth of which he is not able to give any evidence, but his own aſſertion, which is no proof, he is guilty of ſlandering his neighbour, and it is proper that he ſhould ſuffer as a ſlanderer. At leaſt, he ought to be conſidered as a ſlanderer, and is juſtly expoſed to ſuffer as ſuch.*

Thirdly.

* If it ſhould be aſked, Whether the perſon who is really guilty of the evil deed, though there can be no legal proof of it, ought not to confeſs it, ſeeing he knows it to be true; And how can he deny it, conſiſtent with truth? The anſwer is, The guilty perſon has no more call or right to confeſs and publiſh his fault, than if the other had not reported it, and therefore he cannot it, conſiſtent with his duty. The other perſon has declared what he cannot prove; and therefore has done it in his own wrong; and it really remains as much of a ſecret, as if he had not aſſerted it. Nor is his ſilence and refuſing to ſay whether he be guilty or not, in any degree, denying the fact, or intimating that the report is not true; or that it is true, and he is guilty. The perſon, who is in this manner accuſed by a ſingle evidence who reports it, without any circumſtance ſufficient to confirm what he aſſerts, ought not to have the queſtion put to him, Whether the report be true, and he be really guilty? Becauſe he has no right to anſwer in the affirmative, if he be really guilty, agreeable to the report; and he cannot anſwer in the negative conſiſtent with the truth. But if any one, imprudently, and without any right, do queſtion him; he has a right to refuſe to give any anſwer, in the affirmative, or the contrary. His proper anſwer will be to this effect: "Since my neighbour, or brother, has reported that I have been guilty of ſuch a crime, let him prove it. If he cannot, he ought not to be believed, but muſt be conſidered as a ſlanderer, and is liable to ſuffer as ſuch. And he who believes the report, and is diſpoſed to treat me as if I were guilty, and takes up this report and ſpreads it yet farther, injures me, and is guilty of ſlander."

Thirdly. The chriſtian is bound by his religion not to ſpread an evil report concerning his brother or neighbour, or make it more public than it already is, though there be good evidence that it is true. If he hear an ill report of his neighbour, or is a witneſs of ſome crime of which his brother is guilty, among other witneſſes, he will be ſorry to ſee, or hear ſuch evil things; but will not go and ſpread them farther, by telling others of them. This would not be conſiſtent with his loving his neighbour as himſelf. For if a chriſtian be guilty of a fault, the more public it is, and the farther it is known, the more diſagreeable it is to him. And it is contrary to his duty, as well as to his inclination, to publiſh his own faults, which otherwiſe might be kept more private. And he who is diſpoſed to publiſh his neighbour's faults, and makes them more known than otherwiſe they would be, is guilty of evil ſpeaking, and real ſlander. But it muſt be here obſerved, that there is an exception from this rule, when it is neceſſary for the public ſafety and good, or the ſecurity of individuals, to have the more private evil deeds, or bad general character of our neighbour made public; or when perſons are called to give evidence againſt men, and be witneſſes of their crimes before civil authority, in order to their being brought to proper puniſhment, for the benefit of ſociety, and the ſuppreſſion of ſuch evil deeds. Or when this is neceſſary to bring an offending brother before the church, that he may be brought to repentance, or rejected and caſt out. And in that caſe the moſt private ſteps are firſt to be taken, in order to bring him to repentance more privately, as has been obſerved in the ſection on church diſcipline.

Fourthly. While a chriſtian is diſpoſed not to publiſh the faults of others, to make them known, or ſpeak freely of them; but to hide and cover them, as far as conſiſtent

ent with the public good, and the ſafety of his neighbour, and his duty; he will be ready to ſay every thing, which he can with truth, and conſiſtent with his duty, in the favour of thoſe in whom he ſees ſome, and perhaps many faults. He will be more ready to ſpeak of the good part of their character, than of the bad, and of thoſe things which are commendable in them. And will appear in their cauſe, and vindicate them, when they appear to be too ſeverely cenſured, and unjuſtly condemned.

6. Chriſtian practice includes the faithful and punctual performance of all relative duties, founded in the different relations and ſtations in which perſons ſtand in this life. Theſe are various, and call for different and various duties; but may be all comprehended in the different relations included in ſuperiours, inferiours, and equals. Love will form the chriſtian to the duties required in thoſe different relations; and they all conſiſt in expreſſing this love in all proper ways in thoſe different relations.

The firſt relations which are the foundation of all others, are thoſe which commonly take place in a family, which require different duties. The heads of a family are generally the parents, huſband and wife. It is the duty of the ſexes in general, to enter into the marriage relation with each other, unleſs their circumſtances be ſo ordered, in divine providence, as to be inconſiſtent with this. The ſtanding command to mankind, is to multiply and fill the earth, in this way, with inhabitants. And the command is, "Let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own huſband." And there is no marriage but this of *one* huſband with *one* wife, conſiſtent with the divine inſtitution, or the good of mankind. This is a peculiar and near relation, ſuited to the comfort and happineſs of human life; and real chriſtianity exalts the enjoyment and happi-

neſs

neſs of this relation unſpeakably, when it takes place in a proper degree in each party. The union conſiſts in love. The huſband is the ſuperiour, and the wife is the inferiour. They are by love to ſerve each other, by mutually promoting each other's comfort and uſefulneſs, and everlaſting happineſs. The inferiority and ſubmiſſion of the wife, when expreſſed properly in the acts of love, will be in no reſpect diſagreeable, but pleaſing, and greatly contribute to the happineſs of the relation. The ſuperiority of the huſband, expreſſed in the moſt tender love, in ſupporting, protecting, honouring, and nouriſhing his wife, is ſuited to render the relation as complete and happy, as any can be in this life.

Their natural affections to their children, will give them pleaſure in miniſtring to them, and providing for them. But chriſtian benevolence will operate ſtrongly to prompt them to give them a religious education, to govern, inſtruct, exhort, and perſuade them to the exerciſe and practice of piety, training them up for Chriſt.

The children, as ſoon as they become pious, and are capable of expreſſing a chriſtian ſpirit, will be all obedience and ſubmiſſion to their parents, and will delight to pleaſe, comfort and honour them in all proper ways. As brethren and ſiſters they will be united in the moſt ſweet bonds of chriſtian love, added to their natural affection to each other, living in the moſt happy peace and harmony, and ſtriving to ſerve and pleaſe each other in conſtant acts of kindneſs. And if there be any other domeſtics, they will quietly, and with fidelity, prudence and cheerfulneſs, do the duty of their place, ſo as to be moſt uſeful and comfortable to every member of the family, taking care that nothing be waſted and loſt; but that the beſt intereſt of the family is ſecured and promoted. Thus regulated and happy is every family, where the true ſpirit and practice of chriſtianity take place, in a proper manner and degree.

Different

Different families, and the individual members of them, are connected with others by natural relation, near neighbourhood, &c. from whence ariſe a number of duties, which are to be practiſed towards them, according to their character, circumſtances and ſtations in life, whether ſuperiours, equals or inferiours; whether virtuous or vicious, friends or enemies. Chriſtianity requires ſuch a conduct towards all, as ſhall expreſs uprightneſs, humility, meekneſs, and good will to all, however different their relation to us, or their character may be. A forgiving ſpirit, and love of benevolence to enemies, is peculiar to a chriſtian, and eſſential to his character. However they may hate him, and injure and abuſe him, he will not be diſpoſed to revenge himſelf, or do or wiſh them the leaſt hurt; but will freely forgive them, and wiſh they may enjoy the higheſt good; and be as ready to do them good, and pray for them, as if they did not hate him, and had not injured him. In the practice of this, chriſtian benevolence appears in the true, diſtinguiſhing nature, beauty and excellence of it: And is therefore particularly and repeatedly enjoined by Chriſt on his diſciples. He ſays, "If ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your treſpaſſes. But I ſay unto you, love your enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you and perſecute you."*

Chriſtianity lays the beſt and only foundation for true friendſhip; by the influence, and in the exerciſe of this, friends may be formed, and the moſt endearing and happy friendſhip take place, and be cultivated. There is a peculiar friendſhip between chriſtians. They love one another with a peculiar love of benevolence and complacency: And therefore are diſpoſed, as they are commanded,

* Matth. v. 44. vi. 15.

commanded, to acts of beneficence and kindness to such especially and in the first place.* But they who are most acquainted with each other, will exercise and enjoy this friendship to a much higher degree. They take a peculiar pleasure in conversing with each other, in which they are under no restraint, opening to one another their sentiments, and their hearts, with great freedom. They put great confidence in each other, and are faithful in keeping the secrets which are between them, and in doing good to each other, and praying for one another; and expressing their love and friendship in all proper ways, while it is in a great measure concealed from the men of the world.

The christian, considered as a citizen, and a member of civil society, connected and supported by civil government, is a peaceable and useful member, sincerely seeking the public good, and ready to promote it in all proper ways, acting with fidelity and discretion, according to his ability, circumstances and station, whether he be a ruler or subject. As a subject, he submits to civil authority, and obeys, and does what he can to support the laws of civil society, carefully performing every social duty, desiring to "lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty." And as a good and faithful member of the community, he will be ready to join with them in all necessary and proper ways to defend themselves from the unreasonable and violent assaults which others may make upon them, to destroy them.

Every christian is, or ought to be, a member of some particular church or society of christians, united in solemn covenant, to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, support and promote his cause and kingdom; maintain his worship and ordinances; and watch over, and assist each other, in christian love, and mutual forbearance, tenderness, and faithfulness. The nature and design of such

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* Gal. vi. 10.

a church, have been conſidered above. This is a ſociety diſtinct from civil, or worldly communities, and independent of them, and there are relative duties peculiar to the members of ſuch churches. They are to pay a particular reſpect to the elders of the churches, to eſteem them very highly for the ſake of their work; and give them double honour; not only by attending upon their miniſtry, and ſubmitting to them, when they declare the truths and duties which Chriſt has revealed and commanded; but alſo by giving them a ſufficient and decent ſupport. They have much duty to do to one another, in faithfully attending to that diſcipline which Chriſt has inſtituted, and practiſing it with prudence, impartiality and reſolution. They are alſo to provide liberally for the poor of the church, and freely to contribute for the ſupply of their bodily wants, ſo that none ſhall ſuffer for the want of the neceſſaries of life. And it is not only the duty of individuals to give relief to particular perſons, when they ſee them to ſtand in need of their help; but they ought to contribute a ſufficient ſum, to be lodged in the hands of the deacons, to enable them to give full relief to all the needy of the church; whoſe duty it is to acquaint themſelves with thoſe who may want, and with prudence and faithfulneſs to diſtribute, ſo as in the beſt and moſt private manner to relieve and comfort them. If the inſtitution and command of Chriſt with reſpect to this, were in any good meaſure obſerved, every member of his churches would be ſo ſupplied with the neceſſaries for the body, that they would have no occaſion to apply to the men of the world, or to any worldly ſociety for help and relief.

Theſe duties of chriſtians, as members of churches, are expreſſions of piety, and have been mentioned as ſuch; but they are alſo relative duties, of humanity and mercy: While every one attends to the duties of

his place and ſtation, according to the grace which is given unto him, ſo as to promote the peace and comfort of every individual, and the edification of the whole body.

III. THERE are duties included in chriſtian practice, which have a more immediate reſpect to himſelf, his own perſon, while they have a more remote reſpect to God and his neighbour.

Univerſal, diſintereſted benevolence, which is oppoſed to ſelfiſhneſs, deſires and ſeeks the higheſt happineſs of all, and therefore of the benevolent perſon himſelf, ſo far as is conſiſtent with the good of others, and the greateſt general good. And as his individual perſon is more immediately under his care, and as he is under greater advantage to take care of his own perſonal intereſt, than others commonly are; and as there are certain exerciſes and duties which reſpect himſelf more immediately, which are neceſſary for his own perſonal comfort and greateſt happineſs, as well as for the greateſt good of others; theſe are eſſential to the chriſtian character, and neceſſarily implied, in loving our neighbour *as ourſelves.* Theſe duties may be ranked under the following heads.

1. Temperance and frugality in eating and drinking. The body requires conſtant nouriſhment by food and drink; and what of this is neceſſary for health, and to preſerve a perſon in a ſtate moſt fit to anſwer the proper ends of life, is commonly taken with pleaſure. But all exceſs and intemperance in eating or drinking, is hurtful to the intemperate perſon, and injurious to others with whom he is connected. The chriſtian therefore is bound by the law of love to be temperate in all things; and to eat and drink for ſtrength and health, and ſo that he may be beſt fitted for the duties of his ſtation, and promote his own greateſt enjoyment and happineſs, and

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that of others. In this he is obliged to conſult his own conſtitution, experience and circumſtances, that he may find what degree and kind of food and drink is beſt ſuited for his health and uſefulneſs; and not to gratify and indulge his appetites any farther than is neceſſary to anſwer theſe ends; but to keep his body under and bring it into ſubjection to theſe rules. And in this way alone he can eat and drink, not unto himſelf, but to the glory of God.

2. Frugality, decency and prudence in apparel. The chriſtian is to put on nothing ſuperfluous, or to gratify pride, or any luſt; but only that which is neceſſary, and beſt ſuited to anſwer the ends of clothing, in which ſome regard is to be had to a perſon's ſtation, buſineſs and circumſtances in life. The chriſtian, whatever apparel he is obliged to wear, or thinks proper to put on, ought to take care to be, and appear neat and clean, as the contrary is indecent, and tends to injure the health of the body. The ſhort, but comprehenſive and important command of Chriſt, being ſtrictly and judiciouſly obſerved, would regulate and fix the chriſtian's practice, both in eating and drinking, and in puting on apparel; "LET NOTHING BE LOST."

3. Chaſtity in thought, ſpeech and behaviour, is an important chriſtian duty. This is ſtrictly commanded, and much inſiſted upon in the ſcripture. Chriſtians are commanded to "put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and make no proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfil the luſts thereof. Now the works of the fleſh are manifeſt, which are theſe, adultery, fornication, uncleanneſs, laſciviouſneſs."* — "But fornication and all uncleanneſs, let it not be once named amongſt you, as becometh ſaints. This is the will of God, even your ſanctification, that ye ſhould abſtain from fornication: That every one of you ſhould

* Rom. xiii. 14. Gal. v. 19.

know how to poſſeſs his veſſel in ſanctification and honour."* The ſtricteſt chaſtity is moſt for the comfort and happineſs and honour of thoſe who practiſe it, and for the benefit of all with whom they are connected; and every thing contrary to this, has the moſt pernicious and fatal tendency, and is injurious in a greater or leſs degree to thoſe who indulge it, and thoſe with whom they are concerned: Therefore, ſtrict chaſtity is obedience to the law of univerſal benevolence; and the contrary, and every thing which tends to it, is oppoſed to this. There is no virtue more recommended in ſcripture, than inviolable chaſtity and continence; and no vice more condemned, and the evil conſequences more expoſed, both in the hiſtorical and preceptive parts of ſcripture, than incontinence and uncleanneſs. This is particularly done by Solomon in his addreſs to young perſons in the firſt chapters of his proverbs, which is propoſed as a proper example for all parents, in their inſtructing and warning their children. Youth are moſt expoſed to violate the rules of ſtrict chaſtity; therefore, have need of inſtruction, warning and reſtraint, on this head, and ought to keep at the greateſt diſtance from the contrary vice, and carefully ſhun every temptation and ſnare, by which they may be decoyed, as thouſands have been, and never have recovered from the evil conſequences. Therefore, the young chriſtian is under the greateſt obligations to "Flee youthful luſts."

4. A careful government and ſuppreſſion of all thoſe paſſions, which diſturb and ruffle the mind, and unfit perſons for duty, and make them uncomfortable to themſelves and to others. As chriſtians ought to govern their bodily inclinations and appetites; and not to gratify, but ſuppreſs and mortify all thoſe, ſo far as they tend to hurt themſelves or others; ſo they are under obligation

* Eph. v. 3. 1 Theſſ. vi. 3, 4.

obligation to regulate and govern their mental paſſions; and ſo to rule their own ſpirits, as to ſuppreſs and lay aſide all the angry, unruly paſſions, which are the production of ſelfiſhneſs and pride; and render themſelves unhappy, ſo far as they are indulged: And, on the contrary, they are commanded to maintain and conſtantly to exerciſe a calm, gentle, meek, peaceable, patient ſpirit, which are the natural attendants and genuine fruit of benevolence, and neceſſary in order to the chriſtian's proper poſſeſſion and enjoyment of himſelf, and attendance on the duties of chriſtianity. "He that is ſlow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his ſpirit, than he that taketh a city. He that hath no rule over his own ſpirit, is like a city that is broken down, and without walls."* Agreeable to this are the apoſtolic injunctions. "Let all bitterneſs, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil ſpeaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſt's ſake hath forgiven you."† "Let your moderation be known unto all men."‡ "The wiſdom that is from above, is peaceable, gentle and eaſy to be intreated."§ "Charity ſuffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; is not eaſily provoked; thinketh no evil."¶

5. A conſtant and careful cultivation and improvement of the mind, in ſeeking, purſuing and acquiring uſeful knowledge, and wiſdom. Solomon ſays "It is not good that the ſoul be without knowledge." This is the life and enjoyment of the mind; and is unſpeakably the higheſt and moſt noble kind of enjoyment, of which a rational creature is capable. All the knowledge which a perſon of an honeſt and good heart obtains, is uſeful to him, and puts him under advantage to be

* Prov. xvi. 32. xxv. 28. † Eph. iv. 31, 32.
‡ Phil. vi. 5. § Jam. iii. 17. ¶ 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5.

more useful to others. This is not to be obtained, and a constant progress made in it, without labour, by diligent attention and inquiry, in the improvement of all those helps and advantages with which we are furnished. The objects of knowledge are various, and infinite; and the knowledge of any of them is not useless to a mind well disposed, and every branch and degree of knowledge is suited to improve such a mind; it really adds to its existence, and increases true wisdom, in a wise and benevolent heart. Some objects are more important, grand and excellent than others, and men have more concern and connection with some, than with others; and therefore the knowledge of them is proportionably more excellent, important and useful. And that knowledge which is of the moral kind, and implies a good taste and right exercises of heart; and is therefore the knowledge of the great objects and truths which respect the moral world, and belong to that, is the most important and excellent kind of knowledge, and does most enlarge the soul, and gives the highest degree of enjoyment. This kind of knowledge is therefore to be sought in the first place, and with the greatest thirst and engagedness of mind.

And as God is infinitely the greatest part of existence, and includes the sum of all the natural and moral world, and the knowledge of his moral character includes the knowledge of his laws, moral government, and kingdom, and of all morality, and of every thing necessary to be known in the moral world; the knowledge of God, is in scripture considered, as comprehending the whole.—"And this is life eternal, that they might *know thee* the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."* "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."†

"If

* John xvii. 3. † Phil. iii. 8.

"If thou crieſt after knowledge, and lifteſt up thy voice for underſtanding: If thou ſeekeſt her as ſilver, and ſearcheſt for her, as for hid treaſures; then ſhalt thou underſtand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God."* "Let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he underſtandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exerciſe loving kindneſs, judgment, and righteouſneſs in the earth: For in theſe things I delight, ſaith the Lord."† This is the knowledge which includes true underſtanding and wiſdom, of which Solomon ſpeaks ſo much in his writings. It is the duty and intereſt of every chriſtian to make advances in this knowledge, and in all kinds of knowledge and ſpeculations for which he has opportunity; as ſubſervient and advantageous to this. In this way he is to "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of his Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt."

And this is one end which the chriſtian ought to have in view, among others, in his devotions and prayers, and in his daily reading and ſtudying the "Holy Scriptures, which are able to make them wiſe unto ſalvation, through faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus, being profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furniſhed unto all good works."‡ This is one end of his conſtant attendance on public inſtruction, and the preaching of the goſpel, that by hearing the word, he may *underſtand* it, and bring forth fruit. For this end he is to meditate, read and ſtudy, as he has opportunity, that he may improve and advance in uſeful knowledge; "Trying all things, and holding faſt that which is good." And this ought to be one end in his converſing with his neighbours, and chriſtian friends. He ought not only to ſtudy to ſpeak to their benefit and edification, but to converſe in order to get inſtruction himſelf, and improve

* Prov. ii. 3, 4, 5. † Jer. ix. 24. ‡ 2 Tim. ii. 15, 16, 17.

prove his own mind in knowledge and underſtanding; and will therefore "Be ſwift to hear, and ſlow to ſpeak." And, in this view he will avoid, as much as may be, all trifling and vain company, as well as that which is worſe; and he will be ready to obey the command given by Solomon, "Go from the preſence of a fooliſh man, when thou perceiveſt not in him the lips of knowledge."*— And, on the contrary, he will ſeek the company of the ſerious and wiſe, from whom he may hope to get inſtruction. "For he that walketh with wiſe men, ſhall be wiſe: But a companion of fools ſhall be deſtroyed."†

6. The chriſtian is diligent and faithful in attending to, and proſecuting the buſineſs of his particular calling, in which he is fixed by divine providence, in oppoſition to ſloth, idleneſs, and miſpenſe of time. He attends to his own proper calling and buſineſs, and purſues that with induſtry, prudence, and diligence, and is not a buſy body in other mens matters; not an idle tattler, and brawler, going from houſe to houſe, and ſpending his time in idle chat, which is of no advantage to himſelf or to any one elſe, but the contrary: But abides in his own calling, ſteadily proſecuting his buſineſs, doing every thing in the proper time and ſeaſon. He does not ſit up late, when there is no particular and extraordinary call to it, which tends to injure his health, and unfit him for his proper buſineſs, or prevent his riſing early to attend in the proper ſeaſon on the duties of his calling. Thus, he conſcientiouſly and with care obeys the command, "Not to be ſlothful in his buſineſs; fervent in ſpirit, ſerving the Lord; abiding with diligence in the ſame calling, wherein he is called."‡

REFLECTIONS.

* Prov. xiv. 7. † Prov. xiii. 20. ‡ Rom. xii. 11. 1 Cor. vii. 20.

REFLECTIONS.

I. FROM the above brief ſketch of chriſtian practice, and the character of a true chriſtian, it appears that chriſtianity is in the beſt manner ſuited to make thoſe happy in this world, and forever, who cordially embrace and practiſe it; and to render ſociety, whether public, or more private, beautiful and happy.

So far as the true ſpirit, and proper practice of chriſtianity takes place, it delivers each ſubject of it from thoſe paſſions and luſts, which war againſt the ſoul and contain evil and unhappineſs, even in the indulgence of them; and it forms them to thoſe views and exerciſes, reſpecting the moſt grand and excellent objects, and that practice, in which they enjoy peace of mind, and conſcience, and have the beſt and higheſt kind of enjoyment of which the human nature is capable, which never can cloy or ceaſe; but is in the nature of it reaſonable, pure and permanent. And it forms the chriſtian to the higheſt and moſt excellent kind of ſocial felicity. It conſtitutes the beſt, moſt perfect and happy ſociety that can be imagined, or that is poſſible. It ſpreads the moſt happy peace through the whole community, however large it may be, fixes every one in his proper place, and makes him uſeful to the whole; and at the ſame time gives each individual the higheſt ſatisfaction and pleaſure, in being a member of ſuch a ſociety, compoſed of the moſt excellent friends to each other, and to him; and he as a friend to every member of the ſociety, and to the whole, enjoys the good and happineſs of the whole, to the extent of his capacity. Chriſtianity forms ſociety to the ſtrongeſt, moſt permanent and happy union, ſo far as the true ſpirit of it is imbibed, and carried into practice. It binds them together by the ſtrong, everlaſting and moſt perfect bond, charity, or chriſtian LOVE.

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And it muſt appear to all who properly uſe their reaſon, that piety, and the practice of it, is eſſential to the beſt good and greateſt happineſs of ſociety, and of individuals in this world. It is that love which unites men to God and the Redeemer, and forms them to all the acts of piety, and gives them the higheſt enjoyment; which at the ſame time unites them to each other, and forms them to all ſocial duties and enjoyments. The latter cannot exiſt without the former. Where there is no piety, there may be a ſort of union in ſociety, and a degree of enjoyment, in imitation of chriſtian ſocial virtues and duties; but it muſt be a low, mean thing, without any real benevolence, or proper, laſting foundation; and therefore not to be depended upon.

How greatly miſtaken then are they, who do not conſider the exerciſe and practice of piety, as any part of ſocial happineſs, or in the leaſt advantageous to it, and leave chriſtianity wholly out of their idea and ſcheme of public virtue, and ſocial happineſs! It is impoſſible there ſhould be any great degree of perſonal or public ſocial happineſs, without chriſtian piety and morality, founded on chriſtian principles: And ſo far only, as theſe take place, perſonal and public happineſs is ſecured and promoted. And they muſt certainly have a low, debaſed, and corrupt taſte for enjoyment and happineſs, who think they can be more happy, both perſonally, and in ſociety, without real chriſtianity than with it; and are expecting and ſeeking it for themſelves and the public, in oppoſition to chriſtian practice, and in diſregard to the laws of Chriſt, and by an open violation of them. Their enjoyment, conſidered perſonally and by themſelves, or in ſociety, muſt be mean and low at beſt, and very unworthy of man, who is made capable of unſpeakably higher and more noble happineſs in his own mind, independent of others, or in ſociety, in the exerciſe and

practice

practice of chriſtianity, and the ſocial virtues and conduct which it preſcribes.

It will be aſked by ſome, Whether all this be not confuted by fact and experience, ſince chriſtianity has not rendered ſocieties and kingdoms happy, where it has been generally received and profeſſed; and has been the means of the contrary, and produced contentions, cruel perſecutions, and wars: And chriſtians have contended with chriſtians, and perſecuted and deſtroyed each other?

Answer. That chriſtianity has had no better and no more happy effect, where it has been in a ſenſe received and profeſſed, has not been owing to the nature and tendency of it; but to the abuſe of it, and oppoſition to it, and a refuſal cordially to receive it, and practiſe agreeable to the ſpirit, and revealed laws of it. By this it has been perverted to very bad purpoſes, and made the occaſion of great miſchief and unhappineſs among men. Any one may be certain of this, by attending to the Bible, and well obſerving what are the principles, rules and practice, there inculcated and preſcribed; and what would be the certain effect, if they were cordially received and obeyed. We muſt conſult the Bible if we would know what chriſtianity is; what are the truths there revealed, and what diſpoſition, exerciſes and practiſes it does recommend and enjoin. And in this way alone can we learn, and be able to judge of the nature and tendency of it, and ſee how far it has been abuſed and perverted by men. He who will attend to the Bible with impartiality, candour and diſcerning, will be ſure, that whenever the truths and religion there revealed ſhall be properly received, and reduced to practice by all the people; and chriſtianity ſhall have a genuine and complete effect, it will effectually baniſh all the evils which now take place in ſociety among men, whether more

private

private or public, by puting an end to all unrighteouſneſs and oppreſſion, unfaithfulneſs and fraud; to all contention and war, pride, ambition and ſelfiſhneſs, and to the indulgence of every luſt, in word or conduct, which tends to evil, or to hurt any one. And on the contrary, it will introduce that uprightneſs, and univerſal righteouſneſs in practice, that benevolence, and beneficence to all, every one taking his proper place, and doing the duties of it, ſo as to advance the good of the whole; which will ſpread univerſal peace, proſperity and happineſs, through the whole ſociety, nation or kingdom: And that nothing can deſtroy or diſturb, the peace, good order and happineſs of ſociety, but a deviation from the truths and duties inculcated in the holy ſcriptures.

The ſcripture foretels the evils of which the goſpel would be the occaſion, by the abuſe of it; and the oppoſition which would be made to it; and the corruption and apoſtacy, both in doctrine and practice, which ſhould take place among the profeſſors of chriſtianity, which would be the occaſion of perſecution, and innumerable calamities. And theſe having actually taken place as they were predicted, is ſo far from being an objection to the truth and excellency of chriſtianity, that hereby is exhibited a ſtanding evidence of its divine original; and may juſtly be conſidered, as a pledge of the advantage and happineſs which it ſhall produce in this world, in the laſt days, when it ſhall have its proper effect on the hearts and lives of mankind, which is alſo foretold.

The ſalutary influence chriſtianity has had already in the world, forming men to be peaceable, harmleſs, and uſeful members of ſociety, in the practice of righteouſneſs and goodneſs, where the dictates of it have been in any meaſure properly regarded and obeyed, of which there have been many inſtances, is ſufficient to convince every candid mind, that when it ſhall be no longer abuſed

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and perverted to evil purpoſes, by men of perverſe minds, but univerſally underſtood, embraced and practiſed; it will render mankind and ſociety, unſpeakably more happy than they have ever yet been, or can be, while men are ignorant of it, or refuſe to regard and obey its dictates. That there is ſuch a happy era coming, is abundantly foretold in the divine oracles, when by the influence and power of the goſpel, in the hand of the exalted Redeemer, he will reign univerſally in the hearts of men, and they ſhall obey him; and the happy effect of chriſtianity ſhall be ſeen in fact and experience, in extirpating all unrighteouſneſs and violence from the earth, and introducing univerſal peace, love and beneficence, when men ſhall learn war no more; but practiſe all the ſocial virtues, each one in his proper ſphere; honeſtly and wiſely ſeeking and promoting the greateſt public good, and the happineſs of every individual, ſo far as he has ability and advantage.

But the moſt complete and happy effect of chriſtianity will take place, and appear in the fulneſs, importance and glory of it, when the kingdom of Chriſt ſhall be brought to perfection in the future ſtate; when the moſt beautiful, harmonious and happy ſociety will be formed by it, in the exerciſe of love to God and to one another, by which the moſt perfect union, and the higheſt poſſible happineſs ſhall exiſt forever. Here then we are to look, to ſee what is the nature and genuine tendency of chriſtianity; and what will be the happy effect of it to individuals, and to ſociety, when it has overcome all oppoſition, and ſhall reign in perfection, in the heart and practice of every member of the kingdom of Chriſt.

II. FROM this view of chriſtian practice, and it being thus in all reſpects ſuited to promote the good of mankind and the welfare and happineſs of ſociety in

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this world, arises a strong and forcible argument that the Bible is from God, and christianity has a divine original.

They who reject the Bible as a revelation from God, do generally confess that the rules of moral conduct contained in it are suited to promote the good of society, and the peace and happiness of mankind in this world: And that christian morality, and attendance on the institutions of the christian religion, public worship and instruction, tend to promote civility and good order among men, and the political good of society. In this they appear to be really inconsistent with themselves, and confute their own creed. For this being granted (and grant it they must, or deny what is evident from reason and fact) the inference is clear and strong, that the Bible is a revelation from heaven.

Were the Bible a contrivance of man, of one man, or any number of men, who joined to form a plan to promote the good of society, it cannot be reasonably supposed there would be no gross mistakes in it; or that it would be suited to promote the good of society in every age, and different nations of the world, and in all the various and different circumstances of mankind, under all the different forms of civil government, as it really is. Much less can this be supposed, when it is written by different men, unknown to each other, in various ages and nations, and widely differing in their education, and particular tastes, habits and customs. That a book should be written by these men, in such circumstances, on so many different occasions, which, when carefully examined, contains one consistent system of rules for moral life, suited to the comfort and happiness of every individual, and the greatest good of all human societies; and in this respect far exceed the best code of civil laws that was ever invented, without any light and assistance from this book, is the most incredible position that can be asserted.

CONCLUSION.

CONCLUSION.

HAVING diligently and with care examined the holy ſcriptures to find what is that ſyſtem of doctrines, truths and duties revealed there; and endeavoured to ſtate them, and ſet them in a proper and clear light; and having at length finiſhed what was propoſed and undertaken, we may now look back, and upon a general review of the whole, it is preſumed that the following concluſions may be deduced with clear and abundant evidence.

I. THAT there is a connection, conſiſtence and harmony in the ſyſtem of truths, taken from the holy ſcriptures, ſtated and explained in the foregoing work.

Care and pains have been taken to ſupport and prove each by the ſacred oracles; but it is hoped that all theſe conſidered collectively, and the whole put together, and joined in one ſyſtem, will, "like an arch, add ſtrength and firmneſs to each part," and increaſe the evidence that every doctrine that has been advanced as important truth, is indeed contained in the Bible, and ſo eſſential to the whole, that it cannot be excluded and rejected without marring, and in a ſenſe rejecting all the reſt, which are connected with it, and really implied in it. It is certain, that doctrines inconſiſtent with each other are not to be found in divine revelation. If any two or more truths are plainly revealed, between which we cannot ſee the conſiſtence, we may be ſure they are conſiſtent with each other, and that it is owing to our ignorance, and to ſome miſtake we are making, that we do not ſee them to agree perfectly. But when the agreement and conſiſtence of every important doctrine revealed in the Bible is diſcerned, this gives ſatisfaction to the

mind, and casts a lustre of light and beauty over the whole. No pains therefore ought to be spared in examining the Bible, in this view, that we may learn what are the doctrines there revealed; and be able to see their connection and consistence.

There is one chain, or consistent scheme of truth, which runs through the whole of the Bible. And every doctrine contained in this divine plan, is not only consistent with the rest, but as much a part of the whole, as is each link of a chain, so that not one can be broken or taken out, without spoiling, or at least injuring the chain. In this view, the foregoing system is offered to the examination of all, who are willing to search the Bible daily, and in the light of that, to try every doctrine that has been advanced, that they may find, whether they be agreeable to the scripture, and consistent with each other, or not; and accordingly receive or reject them. It is not pretended, that every particular article which has been mentioned, as matter of conjecture or probable, of which there are some instances; or that is considered as more evident from scripture, than the opposite, is essential to the system. If it be consistent with the whole, it may be received, though it be not essential; and if it should be thought by any, not worthy to be received, or not so evident from scripture as the contrary, it may be rejected, and the contrary believed, perhaps, as consistent with the system of connected truth. Of this every one will judge for himself. And though persons may differ in their judgment on some sentiments of this description, which have been mentioned; yet they may agree in receiving every doctrine which is essential to a system of truth, which is harmonious in every part, and forms one connected, consistent plan of divine truth. But if any doctrine be denied and rejected, which is a necessary part of the system of truth revealed in the scripture,

ture, or which is really implied in it, the connection is hereby broken, and the whole ſyſtem is deſtroyed; and every truth contained in it, is implicitly given up and denied: As a chain is broken and ſpoiled, by taking away one link of it; and a well cemented and ſtrong arch is broken down and demoliſhed, by removing a ſmall, but neceſſary part of it. From this it follows,

II. THAT there is no other ſcheme, or ſyſtem of ſuppoſed truth, which is connected and conſiſtent with itſelf, through the whole of it.

This follows as a neceſſary concluſion from the foregoing. If that be true therefore, this muſt be alſo true. There is but one conſiſtent plan of religious truth, which is revealed in the ſcripture; and another cannot be invented, or exiſt, which is conſiſtent with itſelf in every part. Therefore, if we can find what is the ſyſtem of doctrines revealed in the Bible (and this we may and ſhall do, if it be not wholly our own fault) we may be ſure no other, which is throughout conſiſtent, can be found, or is poſſible. As every divine revealed truth is perfectly conſiſtent with the whole truth; and every doctrine comes in, to make and complete one whole, and is ſo connected as to make one uniform ſyſtem, which is not capable of any alteration, without rendering it imperfect: So error and falſe doctrine, is always neceſſarily inconſiſtent with itſelf; and no ſyſtem of error can be invented, which is not inconſiſtent, and does not imply a contradiction. Thus error is always crooked, and cannot be made ſtraight. Falſe doctrines may be, and often have been advanced, and formed into a ſort of a ſyſtem, and have a degree of connection and agreement with each other, and may be joined with ſome truths; and be made to appear plauſible, and even conſiſtent with all truth, to a ſuperficial, undiſcerning eye;

and eſpecially to a mind filled with prejudices againſt the truth, and real diſguſt of it. But when theſe doctrines, or ſyſtem of errors, are critically examined by a diſcerning mind, they will be found to imply groſs inconſiſtencies and contradictions. And a mind thus prejudiced, and diſaffected with the great truths of divine revelation, may view them as inconſiſtent with reaſon, and with each other, and think he finds innumerable contradictions in the Bible; and conſequently reject it, and embrace what appears to him a more conſiſtent, or at leaſt a more pleaſing ſcheme. But nothing is obtained by this, but a temporary pleaſing dream, and deluſion; which when properly examined will appear to conſiſt in confuſion and ſelf contradiction, and if followed in the natural and genuine tendency of it, will land the infidel in total darkneſs, and univerſal ſcepticiſm, the greateſt of all contradictions and abſurdities. This has been verified by numerous facts in the chriſtian world; and inſtances of it are multiplying at this day.

Thoſe doctrines, which are inconſiſtent with the abſolute ſupremacy and independence of God; his omniſcience, unchangeableneſs, and infinite felicity; his infinite wiſdom, rectitude and goodneſs, muſt be falſe doctrines; and all that are connected with them, and follow from them, muſt be alſo contrary to the truth, and are an implicit denial of the being of the true God, and inconſiſtent with any proper acknowledgment of him. The denial of the decrees of God, and that he hath fore-ordained whatſoever comes to paſs, and all thoſe doctrines which are implied in this, and follow from it, are inconſiſtent with this true character of God, and therefore are falſe doctrines, and an implicit denial of the being of the only true God, and inconſiſtent with all true piety, and if followed in their true conſequences, will lead to univerſal ſcepticiſm, darkneſs and deluſion.

Thoſe

Thoſe tenets relating to human liberty, and that moral agency of man, neceſſary in order to render him capable of virtue or vice, praiſe or blame, which are inconſiſtent with the decrees of God fixing all events, and all the actions of men, are inconſiſtent with the divine character, and even with the exiſtence of God; are inconſiſtent with the holy ſcripture; and are inconſiſtent with themſelves, implying ſelf contradiction, and the greateſt abſurdity; which, it is ſuppoſed, has been in ſome meaſure made manifeſt in the foregoing work. And without mentioning more particulars, it is left to the candid, conſiderate reader to examine every doctrine which has been propoſed in this view; and it is preſumed that he will find the whole, and eſpecially all the leading ſentiments, not only conſiſtent with each other, but with the being, perfections and character of God, revealed in the ſcripture; and that no other ſcheme of doctrine can be conſiſtent with theſe, or with itſelf; but tends to infidelity, and to remove all important, religious truth: And if ſo, and he be diſpoſed to receive the truth in the love of it, his mind will by this be more eſtabliſhed in the truth, and know it, and that no lie is of the truth; but that this is the true God, and eternal life.* And the farther he proceeds in the line of truth, and the more clear and comprehenſive view he obtains of it, the greater will be his confidence and aſſurance that this is the only ſyſtem of doctrines, which is agreeable to the divine perfections, the word of God, and with itſelf; and that theſe are the doctrines which are according to godlineſs: And the greater ſatisfaction and joy will he have, in contemplating, loving and obeying them.

III. It appears from the whole of the foregoing, that it is of great importance, that the doctrines and truths contained in divine revelation, ſhould be underſtood, believed

* John ii. 21. v. 20.

lieved and loved; that this is neceſſarily implied in the exerciſe and practice of true religion, without which there is no ſalvation.

If this were not important and neceſſary, there would be little or no need of a divine revelation. This is a revelation of a ſyſtem of truth, and of duty; the foundation and reaſon of which is the revealed truth; and all obedience conſiſts in knowing, loving and obeying the truth. Therefore, were there no doctrines, no truth and articles of faith revealed, no duty or obedience could be enjoined, or known. The Bible reveals a ſyſtem of truth: It reveals the being and character of God; his works and deſigns; the ſtate and character of man; the perſon and character of the Redeemer; his work and deſigns, and the way of ſalvation by him; what God does, and what man muſt be and do, in order to his ſalvation: The Bible opens the inviſible world to men, and ſets before them the great, important truths relating to the inviſible eternal kingdom of Chriſt: And there cannot be one exerciſe of piety or charity, or any duty of either of theſe performed by any man, unleſs it be in the view of thoſe revealed truths, or in conformity to them.

The holy ſcripture therefore, repreſents the knowledge and belief of the truth, as neceſſary to ſalvation. That faith, without which men cannot be ſaved, is "The belief of the truth." "He that believeth ſhall be ſaved." This ſuppoſes ſome truth to be believed; and what can this be but the truths of the goſpel; the truth, to which Chriſt came to bear witneſs? Were there no revealed truths, there would be nothing to be believed; no objects of faith; for faith is a belief of the truth. Surely none will ſay, ſaving faith conſiſts in believing nothing, or in believing a lie! Chriſt ſpeaks of the knowledge of the truth, as neceſſary in order to ſalvation, and peculiar to his followers. "If any man will do his will,

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he ſhall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of myſelf."* "And ye ſhall know *the truth*, and *the truth* ſhall make you free."† "Sanctify them through *thy truth, thy word is truth.*"‡ When the ſpirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth."§ The Apoſtle Paul repreſents the great deſign of the goſpel to be, to bring chriſtians to a union in knowledge and faith, or a belief and practice of truth. "Till we all come in the *unity of the faith*, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt. That we henceforth be no more children, toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every *wind of doctrine*, by the ſleight of men, and cunning craftineſs, whereby they lie in wait *to deceive*. But *ſpeaking the truth in love*, may grow up unto him in all things, which is the head, even Chriſt."‖ He ſpeaks of the *doctrine which is according to godlineſs*, as neceſſary to be known and obeyed by every chriſtian.¶ He directs Timothy to "Hold faſt the form of ſound words," which he had heard of him.** By the form of ſound words, nothing can be meant, but the ſyſtem of goſpel doctrines, which the Apoſtle taught, and in which he had inſtructed Timothy. And he was to hold faſt thoſe ſound words, thoſe wholeſome, important, ſolid truths, by meditating upon them, and maintaining and preaching them. Which is the ſame with holding and preaching *ſound doctrines*, and being ſound in the faith, which he repeatedly mentions.

And the knowledge and belief of the truth revealed in the Bible, is ſo important and eſſential to a chriſtian, that all chriſtian practice is denoted by obeying the truth, "Obeying from the heart the form of doctrine which has been delivered to them."†† Doing the truth,

* John vii. 17. † John viii. 32. ‡ John xvii. 17. § John xvi. 13.
‖ Eph. iv. 14, 15. ¶ 1 Tim. vi. 3. ** 2 Tim. i. 13. †† Rom. vi. 17.

and walking in the truth.* And chriſtians are exhorted to "Contend earneſtly for the faith, which was once delivered unto the ſaints."† The faith which had been delivered to the church, can be nothing but the ſyſtem of doctrines contained in divine revelation; the truths implied and exhibited in the goſpel, which were to be believed and maintained by chriſtians. The Apoſtle Paul, in all his epiſtles, ſhews how important the doctrines and truths of the goſpel are, and the neceſſity of their being underſtood and embraced, in order to be ſaved: That the goſpel conſiſts eſſentially in theſe; which therefore is overthrown and deſtroyed, by embracing and promoting the oppoſite errors. Chriſt ſays to Pilate, "To this end was I born, and for this cauſe came I into the world, *that I ſhould bear witneſs unto the truth.*"‡ By *the truth* here, is not meant one particular truth, but all the truths and doctrines of divine revelation; the ſyſtem of truth, in which the goſpel conſiſts. This ſets the importance of the doctrines of the goſpel, and the neceſſity of underſtanding, believing and practiſing them, in a ſtriking light. For to oppoſe, or neglect and live in ignorance of theſe, is to oppoſe or ſlight that, which Chriſt came into the world to eſtabliſh and promote. If the doctrines of the goſpel be rejected, or overlooked and not underſtood, the only foundation of chriſtian faith and practice is removed, and there remains nothing to be believed, and no duty to be done.

Hence it appears, how contrary to reaſon and ſcripture, and to common ſenſe, that poſition is, which has been eſpouſed and maintained by many, either expreſsly or by implication, viz. That it is of no importance what men believe, or whether they believe the truths contained in divine revelation, or not, if their external conduct be regular and good. This poſition is of the moſt danger-

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* John iii. 21. 3 John 4. † Jude 3. ‡ John xviii. 37.

ous and evil tendency: For it wholly ſets the goſpel aſide, and excludes that as altogether needleſs, which Chriſt ſays, he came into the world to eſtabliſh and promote. According to this it is of no importance whether chriſtians act from principle, or not, or from what principle they act, if they act from any; or whether they believe or underſtand one truth contained in the goſpel; or diſbelieve and reject all. This makes all creeds and confeſſions of faith, or bearing witneſs to the truth, entirely uſeleſs and vain: And according to this, no candidate for admiſſion into a church, or to the work of the miniſtry, ought to be examined as to his underſtanding and knowledge, or belief of any doctrine contained in divine revelation, as any qualification neceſſary in order to his being admitted: For however ignorant he may be of the principles of Chriſt, or whatever he believes, he may be as good a chriſtian, and as fit for an officer and teacher in the church, as any other perſon whatever.

And the directions and commands which the Apoſtle Paul gave to Timothy and Titus, reſpecting the ſound doctrines of the goſpel, were highly improper; or, at leaſt, are out of date now. Such are the following:—"I beſought thee to abide ſtill at Epheſus, that thou mighteſt charge ſome that they teach *no other doctrine*. Take heed to thyſelf, *and to thy doctrine*. If any man teach otherwiſe, and conſent not to wholeſome words, even the words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and *to the doctrine which is according to godlineſs*, he is proud, knowing nothing. *Hold faſt the form of ſound words*, which thou haſt heard of me, in faith and love which is in Chriſt Jeſus. The things which thou haſt heard of me among many witneſſes, the ſame commit thou to faithful men, who ſhall be able to teach others alſo."* "A biſhop muſt be blameleſs, as the ſteward of God, holding

* 1 Tim. i. 3. iv. 16. vi. 3, 4. 2 Tim. i. 13. ii. 2.

holding faſt the *faithful word*, as he hath been taught, that he may be able *by ſound doctrine*, both to exhort and to convince gainſayers, whoſe mouths muſt be ſtopped. Wherefore rebuke them ſharply, that they may be *ſound in the faith*. But ſpeak thou the things which become *ſound doctrine*. In all things ſhewing thyſelf a pattern of good works: *In doctrine ſhewing uncorruptneſs*, gravity, ſincerity; ſound ſpeech that cannot be condemned."*

The conſequence and evil tendency of the ſentiment now under conſideration, appears from fact. That which is now called liberality of ſentiment, and catholiciſm, which is ſpreading far and wide, and is celebrated by multitudes, as a moſt excellent, noble way of thinking, has its foundation in this. This liberality and catholiciſm, diſcards all attachment to any particular ſyſtem of truth, or belief of any diſtinguiſhing doctrines of the goſpel, as uſeleſs and hurtful; and holds that it is no matter what a man's religious creed or practice is, or whether he regards any, or not; as he may be a good man, and go to heaven without any thing of this kind. This really renounces the Bible, and paves the way to infidelity: And this leads on to the darkneſs and horrors of atheiſm itſelf.

IV. FROM the foregoing ſyſtem of truths and duties, which is contained in the Bible, and taken wholly from it, ariſes the moſt clear and ſatisfying evidence that it is a revelation from God, and no human invention: "But holy men of God have ſpoken and written it, as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt."

The evidence that the Bible contains a divine revelation, has been in ſome meaſure exhibited and conſidered, in the firſt chapter of this ſyſtem; eſpecially what is called the external evidence. And ſome of the internal evidence was

* Tit. i. 7, 9, 11, 13. ii. 1, 7. 8.

was mentioned: And it was obſerved, that this would be made to appear in the cleareſt and moſt advantageous light, by proſecuting the inquiry concerning the doctrines and duties revealed and inculcated in this book; which was then propoſed. This is now finiſhed. And upon a careful review of the whole, muſt it not be evident to every attentive, honeſt, candid mind, that in this book only is to be found ſuch a ſyſtem of truth, which could not be contrived, or even thought of by man; but muſt be from God: That it contains a ſyſtem of doctrines and commands, which man's wiſdom does not teach, and never can; but which the Holy Ghoſt alone teacheth.

Here the true God is repreſented in his glorious character, ſubſiſting in a manner infinitely above our comprehenſion; yet ſuited, ſo far as we can conceive, moſt perfectly to accompliſh his revealed deſigns, and to raiſe creatures, the objects of his love, to the higheſt happineſs. He is clothed with unlimited power, wiſdom and goodneſs, abſolutely independent, ſelf ſufficient, and allſufficient; and has fixed on a plan of operation, which is wiſe and good, like himſelf; including all his works and every event that ſhall ever take place, ſuited in the higheſt degree to glorify himſelf, and effect the higheſt good and happineſs of the creation: And they muſt be bleſſed who love and truſt in him. His law is perfectly right, wiſe and excellent, and expreſſes the moral character and perfections of God; is infinitely important, and muſt ſtand forever, as the only rule of moral rectitude: And every one muſt be happy ſo far as he is conformed to it. Here rebellion againſt God, and violation of this law, is repreſented in the infinitely evil and malignant nature of it; and all the diſpenſations and works of God, and his conduct towards his creatures, are ſuited and deſigned to make the cleareſt and moſt laſting diſplay of this. Here is revealed the way in which mankind

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are become univerſally ſinful, mortal and miſerable; and the infinite guilt and miſery of their ſtate is diſcovered; and that they are totally ruined and loſt, in themſelves. This lays the only foundation for the diſcovery of infinite benevolence and ſovereign grace in the redemption of man; and is the ground of the exiſtence and revelation of the perſon, character and works of the Redeemer, and ſalvation by him. And every thing relating to redemption, is in the higheſt degree ſuited to make the brighteſt and moſt glorious manifeſtation of the power, wiſdom, righteouſneſs, goodneſs, truth and faithfulneſs of God, and his infinite diſpleaſure with the ſinner, to humble man, and ſhew his abſolute and entire dependence on God, conſiſtent with the infinite vileneſs and criminality of the leaſt deviation, even in heart, from perfect obedience to his law; to diſcover the infinite evil of the juſt conſequence of ſin; and ſet before creatures the reaſonableneſs and importance of obedience, and the ſtrongeſt motives that are poſſible, to avoid every ſin, and fear and obey God. And every truth of divine revelation is leveled againſt the ſin and rebellion of man; and every thing included in redemption, is perfectly ſuited to form the redeemed to the moſt beautiful, ſweet, perfect holineſs, and to raiſe them to the higheſt happineſs and glory. And while eternal happineſs, on the one hand, and endleſs miſery on the other, are ſet before men, and one or the other muſt be the certain portion of every one, according to his conduct in this life, in embracing the goſpel and obeying the Redeemer, or rejecting him, and living in ſin; this tends to ſolemnize every mind and fill every one with the greateſt concern, and awaken him to the utmoſt exertions to eſcape the one, and obtain the other; and "work out his own ſalvation with fear and trembling."

And the exerciſe and practice of piety, righteouſneſs and benevolence in all the branches of religion and chriſ-

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tian morality, which consist in conformity of heart and life, to the doctrines and precepts contained in the scripture, is the only way to render every man happy in this life, in their various connections, and proper business, and in the use and enjoyment of the things of this world. And were this to take place universally, it would necessarily form men into the most happy society that can take place in this state; and at the same time rectify and enlarge their hearts, and raise their pleasing hope and prospect of glory and honour, and immortality, in the favour of God, and the society of all his friends, in the everlasting kingdom of the Redemer, in consequence of their patient continuance in well doing.

When all this, and more, which might be mentioned, and will naturally come into the view of him who properly attends to the subject, is well considered, together with the external evidence, that the scripture was formed by divine inspiration, mentioned in the first chapter, it must produce a conviction and fixed persuasion that the Bible contains a divine revelation of a system of important saving truth, which is not to be found any where else, and never could have been known, or invented by the reason of man, in his present corrupt state, had it not been thus revealed from heaven; unless the mind be greatly biassed and prejudiced against the truth by the false taste and evil propensities of the heart, by which the reason of man may be so perverted and abused, and the mind so greatly blinded, as to reject the plainest, most consistent and important truth, as gross error and absurdity; and imbibe the most inconsistent and erroneous sentiments, in opposition to the truth.

It is true, indeed, that in order to discern the internal evidence of the truth of the holy scriptures, and see it in its true, clearest and most convincing light, the mind must possess a right taste, and be friendly to true wisdom; for

for the great and leading truths of divine revelation, are more objects of taſte, than of mere ſpeculative reaſon, and cannot be diſcerned in a true light, in their true beauty, excellence and importance, without the former, and by the latter only. Wiſdom is ſeen and juſtified only by the children of wiſdom; and not by the children of folly and vice, who are under the power of a falſe taſte and diſpoſition of mind, which neceſſarily blinds the mind to the beauty, excellence and conſiſtence of the things and truths of the higheſt concern in the moral world. But he who has a true and proper moral taſte and diſcerning, whoſe heart is diſpoſed to be friendly to heavenly wiſdom, is prepared to ſee the divine original of the Bible, from the ſyſtem of truths it contains, and the exerciſes and duties there required, conformable to the doctrines revealed; and to perceive, with a peculiar ſatisfaction and pleaſure, the all convincing evidence, that what the ſcripture reveals is divine, and comes from God. He believes, and has the witneſs within himſelf, that this is the teſtimony of God. He has an underſtanding to know him that is true; and that this is the true God, and eternal life.* This is expreſsly aſſerted by Chriſt, "He that is of God, heareth God's words. Ye therefore hear them not, becauſe ye are not of God. My ſheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: As a ſhepherd goeth before the ſheep, and they follow him; for they know his voice, and a ſtranger they will not follow."† And the Apoſtle John ſays, "We are of God: He that knoweth God, heareth us: He that is not of God, heareth not us."‡ The ſame is aſſerted by the Apoſtle Paul, in plain and ſtrong language. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the ſpirit of God: For they are fooliſhneſs unto him; neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.

But

* 1 John v. 9, 10, 20. † John viii. 47. x. 4, 5, 27. ‡ 1 John iv. 6.

But he that is ſpiritual judgeth all things."* "If our goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, leſt the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them. For God who commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt."†

Nevertheleſs, perſons who are deſtitute of this right taſte, and are at heart, and in practice unfriendly to the dictates of true wiſdom, and enemies to it, may be rationally convinced, and in this ſenſe believe, that the Bible is a revelation from God. They may be ſo perſuaded of the external evidence of this, and ſee ſo much of the internal evidence, in a degree, as to aſſent to it in their reaſon and judgment. They may attend to it ſo much as to be in a degree convinced of their moral blindneſs, and their want of a new heart, and right taſte; and that it is wholly owing to this, that they do not ſee, and are not pleaſed and charmed with the glory of the goſpel; and that this is altogether their own fault; and that they are, on this account, in a very miſerable condition: Yea, they may be in their reaſon and judgment, in a meaſure convinced of all the truths contained in the Bible, while they have no reliſh for them; and they are in their hearts real enemies to them.

And where this conviction does not take place, it is owing to ignorance or prejudices, which take place by a bad education, or from the want of a good one, together with the ſtrong, evil and corrupt biaſſes of their hearts, and the indulgence of various fooliſh and hurtful luſts, and to many other things of this kind, by which many have been led to conclude, that the real and true doc-

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* 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15. † 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4, 6.

trines of divine revelation, are inconſiſtent and abſurd, and to embrace contrary doctrines, more agreeable to the ſelfiſhneſs, pride, and other luſts of men. While others have, from the ſame evil biaſſes, been prejudiced againſt the ſcriptures, and rejected the Bible, as ſo fabalous, inconſiſtent and abſurd, as not to be worthy of the regard of a rational man; and have hereby plunged themſelves into an abyſs of darkneſs and uncertainty, while they have boaſted that they were following the infallible dictates of their own reaſon.

All theſe of every claſs, however diſtinguiſhed in ſome reſpects, are wholly anſwerable and blameable for their ignorance, incredulity and error, and that they do not diſcern, reliſh, and love the truths of divine revelation, in a view of their beauty, conſiſtence and glory, and are not pleaſed and charmed with the divine character, and that of the Redeemer, diſplayed in the Bible. For this is as really owing to a ſhutting the mental eye againſt the light ſhining in the ſcriptures, and a refuſing to come to it and ſee it, as is a perſon's ſhutting his bodily eyes, and refuſing to admit the light of the ſun, when it ſhines in its meridian brightneſs; and is as real a voluntary exerciſe of the governing taſte and propenſity of the heart, oppoſing the light of the truth, as any other exerciſe of heart of which man is capable, though there may be a difference in many reſpects. How criminal then is all infidelity, and turning away from the truth revealed in the ſcriptures, in all thoſe who live under the goſpel! And how awful the conſequence!

A

TREATISE

ON THE

MILLENNIUM.

SHOWING from SCRIPTURE PROPHECY,

THAT IT IS YET TO COME;
WHEN IT WILL COME;
IN WHAT IT WILL CONSIST;

AND THE

EVENTS WHICH ARE FIRST TO TAKE PLACE,
INTRODUCTORY TO IT.

BY SAMUEL HOPKINS, D. D.
Paſtor of the Firſt Congregational Church in NEWPORT, *Rhode Iſland.*

THIS ſhall be written for the generation to come: And the people, which ſhall be created, ſhall praiſe the LORD.——PSALM CII. 18.

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A
TREATISE
ON THE
MILLENNIUM.

DEDICATION.

To the PEOPLE *who ſhall live in the* DAYS *of the* MILLENNIUM.

HAIL, YE HAPPY PEOPLE, HIGHLY FAVOURED OF THE LORD!

TO you the following treatiſe on the Millennium is dedicated, as you will live in that happy era, and enjoy the good of it in a much higher degree, than it can be now enjoyed in the proſpect of it. And that you may know, if this book ſhall be conveyed down to your time, what is now thought of you, and of the happy day, in which you will come on the ſtage of life. You will be able to ſee the miſtakes which are now made on this head; and how far what is advanced here, is agreeable to that which is noted in the ſcripture of truth, and a true and proper deſcription of the events which are to take place; and to rectify every miſtake. All is therefore humbly ſubmitted to your better judgment.

When you ſhall learn what a variety of errors, in doctrine and practice, have been, and are now imbibed and propagated; and in what an imperfect and defective manner they are oppoſed and confuted; and the truth explained and defended; And obſerve how many defects and miſtakes there are in thoſe writings which contain moſt truth, and come neareſt to the ſtandard of all religious truth, the holy ſcripture, you will be ready to wonder how all this could be, where divine revelation is enjoyed. But your benevolence and candour, will make all proper allowances, for all the

prejudices and darkneſs which take place in theſe days, and pity us; while your piety will lead you to aſcribe the greater light and advantages which you will enjoy, and your better diſcerning and judgment, not unto yourſelves, but to the diſtinguiſhing, ſovereign grace of God.

Though you have yet no exiſtence, nevertheleſs, the faith of the chriſtians in this and in former ages, beholds you "at hand to come;" and realizing your future exiſtence and character, you are greatly eſteemed and loved; and the pious have great joy in you, while they are conſtantly, and with great earneſtneſs praying for you. They who make mention of the Lord, will not keep ſilence, nor give him any reſt, till he eſtabliſh, and till he make Jeruſalem a praiſe in the earth. For you they are praying and labouring, and to you they are miniſtring; and without you they cannot be made perfect. And you will enter into their labours, and reap the happy fruit of their prayers, toils and ſufferings.

They will be in heaven, with the holy angels and the ſpirits of the juſt made perfect, when you will come upon the ſtage in this world; and they will rejoice in you, in your knowledge, benevolence, piety, righteouſneſs and happineſs: And all their paſt prayers for you will be turned into joy and praiſe. And you will, in due time, be gathered together with them unto the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in his eternal kingdom, and join in ſeeing and praiſing him forever, aſcribing bleſſing, and honour, and glory, and power, unto the only true God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. Amen.

A TREATISE

A TREATISE ON THE MILLENNIUM.

INTRODUCTION.

A PARTICULAR history of the church of Christ, from the days of the Apostles, to this time; of the various changes through which it has past; of the doctrines which have been taught and maintained; of the discipline, worship, and manners, which have taken place; of the grand apostacy in the church of Rome, and of the reformation, &c. might be properly subjoined to the foregoing system, were it not that this has been done by a number of writers already; so that all who are disposed to acquaint themselves with ecclesiastical history, may obtain this information by books already extant: Which, at the same time, serve to confirm the truth and divine original of Christianity, by discovering, in how many instances the state of the church, and the events which have had a particular respect to it, have been foretold, and have taken place according to the predictions. This subject has been particularly illustrated by Mr. Lowman, in his "Paraphrase and Notes on the Revelation of St. John." And since, more largely, by Bishop Newton, in his "Dissertation on the Prophecies, which have remarkably been fulfilled, and at this time are fulfilling in the world."

A treatise on the Millennium, however, and of the future state of the church of Christ, from this time to the end of the world, as it is predicted and described in divine revelation, is thought

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proper and important, not only as it has been more than once referred to in the preceding work; but as it appears not to be believed by many; and not to be well underſtood by more; or attended to by moſt, as an important event; full of inſtruction; ſuited to ſupport, comfort and encourage chriſtians, in the preſent dark appearance of things, reſpecting the intereſt of Chriſt, and his church; and to animate them to faith, patience and perſeverance in obedience to Chriſt; putting on the hope of ſalvation for an helmet. And to excite them more earneſtly to pray for the advancement and coming of the kingdom of Chriſt: Of which kingdom, as it is to take place in this world, or of chriſtianity itſelf, there cannot be ſo clear, full and pleaſing an idea, if the ſcripture doctrine of the Millennium be kept out of view.

In the firſt three centuries after the Apoſtles, the doctrine of the Millennium was believed and taught; but ſo many unworthy and abſurd things were by ſome advanced concerning it, that it afterwards fell into diſcredit, and was oppoſed, or paſſed over in ſilence, by moſt, until the reformation from popery. And then a number of enthuſiaſts advanced ſo many unſcriptural and ridiculous notions concerning it, and made ſuch a bad improvement of it, that many, if not moſt of the orthodox, in oppoſing them, were led to diſbelieve and oppoſe the doctrine in general; or to ſay little or nothing in favour of the doctrine, in any ſenſe or view of it.

But few of the moſt noted writers of the laſt century in Britain, or in other parts of the proteſtant world, have ſaid any thing to eſtabliſh or explain this doctrine: And thoy who have mentioned it, do appear, at leaſt the moſt of them, not to have well underſtood it. In the preſent century, there has been more attention to it; and the ſcriptures which relate to it, have been more carefully conſidered, and explained by a number of writers; and it has been ſet in a more rational, ſcriptural and important light, than before. Dr. Whitby, has written a treatiſe on the Millennium. And Mr. Robertſon, and Mr. Lowman, have aſſerted and explained it in ſome meaſure, in their expoſition of the book of the revelation by the Apoſtle John; eſpecially the beginning of the twentieth chapter of that book. And the late Preſident Edwards, attended much to this ſubject, and wrote upon it more than any other divine in this century. In the year 1747, he publiſhed a book, entitled "An humble attempt to promote explicit

plicit agreement, and visible union of God's people, in extraordinary prayer for the revival of religion, and the advancement of Christ's kingdom on earth, pursuant to scripture promises and prophecies concerning the last time." In which he produces the evidence from scripture, that such a day is yet to come. And in a posthumous publication of his, intitled "A history of the work of Redemption," this subject is brought into view, and particularly considered. There is also extant, a sermon on the Millennium, by the late Dr. Bellamy. And other writers have occasionally mentioned it. And this subject appears to be brought more particularly into view in the public prayers and preaching, and in conversation, in this age, than in former times; and the doctrine of the Millennium is more generally believed, and better understood.

This is rather an encouragement to attempt farther to explain and illustrate, this important, pleasing, useful subject, in which every christian is so much interested, than a reason why nothing more should be said upon it. The subject is far from being exhausted; and as the church advances nearer to the Millennium state, we have reason to think the predictions in divine revelation respecting it, will be better understood; and the minds of christians will be more excited to great attention to this subject, and strong desires to look into those things, and to earnest longings and prayers for the coming of the kingdom of Christ, as it will take place in that day. And all this is to be effected, by means and proper attempts and exertions. "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."

The prophecies of events which are yet to take place, cannot be so fully understood before these events come to pass, as they will be when they are fulfilled; and there is great danger of making mistakes about them. And it is certain, that many have made mistakes, since they have made very different and opposite constructions of the same predictions; and therefore all cannot be right. So far as the prophecies which respect the Millennium, of which there are many, can be understood, and the real meaning of them be made plain, by a careful and diligent attention to them, and comparing them with each other, men may go on safe ground, and be certain of their accomplishment. And whatever is a plain and undeniable consequence, from what is expresly predicted, is equally revealed in the prediction, as an event, or circumstance

cumſtance of an event, neceſſarily included in it. But every opinion reſpecting future events, which is matter of conjecture only, however probable it may be in the view of him who propoſes it, ought to be entertained with modeſty and diffidence.

The following treatiſe on the Millennium, is not deſigned ſo much to advance any new ſentiments concerning it, which have never before been offered to the public, as to revive and repeat thoſe which have been already ſuggeſted by ſome authors, which are thought to be very important, and ought to be underſtood, and kept conſtantly in the view of all, in order to their having a proper conception of the church of Chriſt in this world, and reading the ſcriptures to their beſt advantage, and greateſt comfort: Though perhaps ſomething will be advanced, reſpecting the events which, according to ſcripture, are to take place between the preſent time, and the introduction of the happy ſtate of the church, which have not been before ſo particularly conſidered.

SECTION

SECTION I.

In which it is proved from Scripture, that the church of Chriſt is to come to a ſtate of proſperity in this world, which it has never yet enjoyed; in which it will continue at leaſt a thouſand years.

THE firſt revelation of a Redeemer, in the prediction ſpoken to the ſerpent, may be conſidered as implying the deſtruction of the kingdom of the devil in this world, by the wiſdom and energy of Chriſt. "He ſhall bruiſe thy head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heal."* Satan has bruiſed the heal of Chriſt, in the ſufferings and diſhonour he has been inſtrumental of bringing upon him, and in the oppoſition he has made to the intereſt and church of Chriſt, in this world. And it is natural to ſuppoſe, that Chriſt ſhall bruiſe his head in this world, by deſtroying his intereſt and kingdom among men, and gaining a conqueſt over him, in the ſtruggle and war which has taken place between the Redeemer and ſeducer of men. And by the Redeemer's *bruiſing the head* of the ſerpent, is ſignified that he will not deſtroy him by the mere exertion of his power, but that by his ſuperiour wiſdom, he will confound and defeat ſatan, in all his ſubtilty and cunning, on which he depends ſo much, and by which he aims to diſappoint Chriſt, and defeat him in his deſigns. And by this he will make a glorious diſplay of his wiſdom, as well as of his power, while he diſcovers the craftineſs of ſatan to be fooliſhneſs, and diſappoints him in his devices, carrying all the counſel of this cunning froward enemy headlong. If all this could not be gathered from this paſſage, conſidered by itſelf; yet that this is the real meaning, will perhaps appear, from what has already taken place in accompliſhing this prediction; and from other prophecies reſpecting this, ſome of which are to be brought into view in the ſequel: Without which the full meaning of this firſt promiſe could not be known.

* Gen. iii. 15.

In order to bruiſe the head of the ſerpent, in this ſenſe, moſt effectually; and turn his boaſted wiſdom nnd cunning into fooliſhneſs, and entirely defeat him in this way, he muſt have opportunity and advantage to try his ſkill and power, and practiſe all his cunning, in oppoſing Chriſt, and the ſalvation of men. And in this way be overcome and wholly defeated, in the ruin of his intereſt and kingdom among men; ſo that all his attempts ſhall turn againſt himſelf, and be the occaſion of making the victory and triumph of the Redeemer greater, more perſpicuous and glorious, in the final prevalence of his kingdom on earth, by drawing all men to him; and deſtroying the works and kingdom of ſatan in this world, and ſetting up his own on the ruins of it, and ſo as to turn all the attempts and works of the devil againſt him, and render the whole ſubſervient to his own intereſt and kingdom. And thus the coming and kingdom of Chriſt will be, "As the light of the morning, when the ſun riſeth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender graſs ſpringing out of the earth by clear ſhining after rain." When the ſun riſes in a clear morning, after a dark night, attended with clouds, rain and ſtorms, the morning is more pleaſant, beautiful and glorious, and the graſs ſprings and grows more freſh and thrifty, than if it had not been preceded by ſuch a ſtormy night. So the proſperity and glory of the church, when the ſun of righteouſneſs ſhall riſe upon it, with healing in his beams, will be enjoyed to a higher degree, and be more pleaſant and glorious, and Chriſt will be more glorified, than if it had not been preceded by a dreadful night of darkneſs, confuſion and evil, by the wickedneſs of men, and the power and agency of ſatan.

The words above cited, are the laſt words of David the Prophet, and ſweet Pſalmiſt of Iſrael, and are a prophecy of the glorious event now under conſideration. "The Spirit of the Lord ſpake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Iſrael ſaid, the Rock of Iſrael ſpake by me. He that ruleth over men muſt be juſt, ruling in the fear of God. And he ſhall be like the morning, when the ſun riſeth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender graſs ſpringing out of the earth, by clear ſhining after rain."* The firſt words may be rendered ſo as to give the true ſenſe more clearly. "He who is to rule over men (i. e. the Meſſiah) is juſt, ruling in the fear of God." The words *muſt be*, in

* 2 Sam. xxiii. 2, 3, 4.

in our tranſlation, are not in the original, and the helping verb *is*, which is commonly not expreſſed, but underſtood, in the Hebrew, ſhould have been ſupplied; "He that ruleth, or is to rule over men, *is* juſt." This is evidently a prophecy concerning Chriſt, his church and kingdom, when he ſhall take to himſelf his great power, and reign in his kingdom, which ſhall ſucceed the reign of ſatan during the four preceding monarchies, which were firſt to take place, which will be more particularly explained, as we proceed in examining the prophecies of this great event, *The latter day glory*. And that theſe words of David, are a prediction of the reign of Chriſt on earth, after the long prevalence of ſatan and wicked men, is farther evident from the words which follow, relative to the ſame thing. "But the ſons of Belial ſhall *all of them* as thorns be thurſt away, becauſe they cannot be taken with hands. But the man that ſhall touch them, muſt be fenced with iron, and the ſtaff of a ſpear, and they ſhall be utterly burnt with fire in the ſame place."

Exactly parallel with this prophecy, is that of the Prophet Malichi. "Behold, the day cometh, that ſhall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, all that do wickedly, ſhall be ſtubble, and the day that cometh ſhall burn them up, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, that it ſhall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name, ſhall the ſun of righteouſneſs ariſe with healing in his wings; and ye ſhall go forth and grow up as the calves in the ſtall. And ye ſhall tread down the wicked; for they ſhall be aſhes under the ſoles of your feet, in the day that I ſhall do this, ſaith the Lord of hoſts."*

But to return from this, which may ſeem to be ſome digreſſion, or anticipation: The great and remarkable promiſe, ſo often made to Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob, and more than once mentioned by the Apoſtles, will next be conſidered. This promiſe was made to Abraham, and of him, three times. "In thee ſhall all the families of the earth be bleſſed."† "All the nations of the earth ſhall be bleſſed in him."‡ "And in thy ſeed ſhall the nations of the earth be bleſſed."§ And this ſame promiſe is made to Iſaac. "I will perform the oath which I ſware unto Abraham thy father—and in thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed."‖ And to Jacob. "In thee and in thy ſeed, ſhall all the families of the earth

* Mal. iv. 1, 2, 3. † Gen. xii. 3. ‡ Chap. xviii. 18.
§ Chap. xxii. 18. ‖ Chap. xxvi. 4.

be bleſſed."* The Apoſtle Peter mentions this promiſe as referring to the days of the goſpel. "Ye are the children of the Prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, ſaying unto Abraham, And in thy ſeed ſhall all the kindreds of the earth be bleſſed."† The Apoſtle Paul ſpeaks of this promiſe as referring to Chriſt, and all who believe in him, making him to be the promiſed ſeed, and believers in him to be thoſe excluſively who are bleſſed in him, in whom the promiſed good takes place. "Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the ſame are the children of Abraham. And the ſcripture, foreſeeing that God would juſtify the heathen through faith, preached before the goſpel unto Abraham, ſaying, In thee ſhall all nations be bleſſed. So then they which be of faith, are bleſſed with faithful Abraham.—Now to Abraham and his ſeed were the promiſes made. He ſaith not, And to ſeeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy ſeed, which is Chriſt."‡

This prediction and promiſe is very expreſs and extenſive, That all the families, kindreds and nations of the earth, ſhould be bleſſed in Chriſt, by their becoming believers in him. This has never yet taken place, and cannot be fulfilled, unleſs chriſtianity and the kingdom of Chriſt ſhall take place and prevail in the world to a vaſtly higher degree, and more extenſively and univerſally, than has yet come to paſs; and all nations, all the inhabitants of the earth, ſhall become believers in him, agreeable to a great number of other prophecies, ſome of which will be mentioned in this ſection.

The reign of Chriſt on earth, with his church and people, and the happineſs and glory of that time, is a ſubject often mentioned, predicted and celebrated in the book of Pſalms. To mention all that is there ſpoken with reference to that happy time, would be to tranſcribe great part of that book. Only the following paſſages will now be mentioned, which are thought abundantly to prove that the kingdom of Chriſt is to prevail and flouriſh in this world, as it has never yet done; and the church is to be brought to a ſtate of purity, proſperity and happineſs on earth, which has not yet taken place, and ſo as to include all nations, and fill the world.

In the ſecond Pſalm, it is predicted and promiſed, that the Son of God ſhall inherit and poſſeſs all nations, to the ends of the earth; which neceſſarily implies, that his church and kingdom ſhall

* Chap. xxviii. 14. † Acts iii. 25. ‡ Gal. iii. 7, 8, 9, 16.

ſhall be thus extenſive, reaching to the ends of the earth, and including all the nations and men on earth. "I have ſet my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: The Lord hath ſaid unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Aſk of me, and I ſhall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for thy poſſeſſion." By Zion here is meant, as in numerous other places in the prophecies, the church of Chriſt, of which Mount Zion was a type.

The twenty ſecond Pſalm contains a prophecy of the ſufferings of Chriſt; and the glory that ſhall follow; and of the latter it is ſaid; "The meek ſhall eat and be ſatisfied. They ſhall praiſe the Lord that ſeek him: Your heart ſhall live forever. All the ends of the world ſhall remember, and turn unto the Lord: And all the kindreds of the nations ſhall worſhip before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's; and he is the Governor among the nations: For evil doers ſhall be cut off: But thoſe that wait upon the Lord, they ſhall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked ſhall not be; yea, thou ſhalt diligently conſider his place, and it ſhall not be. But the meek ſhall inherit the earth, and delight themſelves in the abundance of peace."* This is a prediction of an event which has never taken place yet. Evil doers and the wicked, have in all ages hitherto poſſeſſed the earth, and flouriſhed and reigned in the world. When it is promiſed, that they who wait upon the Lord, and the meek ſhall inherit the earth, and delight themſelves in the abundance of peace, the meaning muſt be, that perſons of this character will yet have the poſſeſſion of the earth, and fill the world, when no place ſhall be found for the wicked, as they ſhall be all deſtroyed, and their cauſe wholly loſt. And all of this character who have lived before this time, and waited upon the Lord in the exerciſe of meekneſs, ſhall flouriſh and live in their ſucceſſors, and in the proſperity and triumph of the cauſe and intereſt, in which they lived and died. This is agreeable to other prophecies of this kind, as will be ſhewn in the ſequel. "All the ends of the earth ſhall remember and turn unto the Lord: And all the kindreds of the nations ſhall worſhip before thee." Who can believe that this has ever yet been? But few of mankind, compared with the whole, have yet turned unto the Lord. By far the greateſt part of the nations of the earth, even to the ends of the world, have worſhipped and do now

* Pſal. xxxvii. 9, 10, 11.

now worſhip falſe gods, and idols. But when *all the ends of the world* ſhall remember, and turn to the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations ſhall worſhip before him; then the meek ſhall inherit the earth, and delight themſelves in the abundance of peace.

The whole of the ſixty ſeventh Pſalm is a prediction of the ſame event, and of the ſame time, which is yet to come. It is a prayer of the church that ſuch a time may take place; at the ſame time expreſſing her aſſurance that it was coming; and the whole is a prophecy of it. "God be merciful unto us, and bleſs us; and cauſe his face to ſhine upon us. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy ſaving health among *all nations*. Let the people praiſe thee, O God; let *all the people* praiſe thee. O let the nations be glad, and ſing for joy; for thou ſhalt judge the people righteouſly, and govern the nations upon earth. Then ſhall the earth yield her increaſe; and God, even our God, ſhall bleſs us. God ſhall bleſs us; and *all the ends of the earth ſhall fear him.*"

The ſeventy ſecond Pſalm, the title of which is, "A Pſalm for Solomon," contains a prophecy of Chriſt and his kingdom, of whom Solomon was an eminent type. The Pſalmiſt looks beyond the type to the antitype, and ſays things which can be applied to the latter only, and are not true of the former, conſidered as diſtinct from the latter; which is common in the ſcripture, in ſuch caſes. Here it is ſaid, "He ſhall come down like rain upon the mown graſs; as ſhowers that water the earth. In his days ſhall the righteous flouriſh; and abundance of peace ſo long as the moon endureth. He ſhall have dominion alſo from ſea to ſea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. All kings ſhall fall down before him: All nations ſhall ſerve him. His name ſhall endure forever: His name ſhall be continued as long as the ſun and moon ſhall be bleſſed in him: All nations ſhall call him bleſſed. Bleſſed be the Lord God, the God of Iſrael, who only doth wondrous things. And bleſſed be his glorious name forever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen."

"Ariſe, O God, judge the earth; for thou ſhalt inherit all nations."* In this Pſalm, the rulers and judges among men are accuſed of unrighteouſneſs, and condemned; and then the Pſalmiſt concludes with the words now quoted, which refer to ſome future event, in which God ſhould judge the earth, and inherit all

* Pſal. lxxxii. 8.

all nations, in a ſenſe in which he had not yet done it. In the ſecond Pſalm, the heathen, i. e. the nations, all nations, are given to Chriſt for his inheritance; and here the ſame thing is expreſſed, "Thou ſhalt inherit all nations." And by his *judging the earth*, is meant his reigning and ſubduing the inhabitants of the earth, to a cordial ſubjection to himſelf; which will be more evident by what follows, where we ſhall find the ſame thing predicted.

The ninety ſixth Pſalm, relates wholly to redemption by Chriſt; to the happineſs and glory of his kingdom, and his reign on earth. "O worſhip the Lord in the beauty of holineſs: *Fear before him, all the earth.* Say among the heathen, that the Lord reigneth: The world alſo ſhall be eſtabliſhed, that it ſhall not be moved, he ſhall judge the people righteouſly. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad: Let the ſea roar, and the fulneſs thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: Then ſhall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord; for he cometh to judge the earth: He ſhall judge the world with righteouſneſs, and the people with his truth." What is here foretold, is to take place before the end of the world, and the general judgment; and it relates to the whole world, all the earth and the nations in it; the kingdom and reign of Chriſt is to extend to all of them: And his coming to judge the earth, and the world in righteouſneſs, intends his reigning in righteouſneſs, and bringing all nations to ſhare in the bleſſings of his ſalvation and kingdom. Agreeable to this, it is ſaid by Chriſt, by Iſaiah and Jeremiah, "Behold a king ſhall reign *in righteouſneſs*. In thoſe days, and at that time, will I cauſe the branch of righteouſneſs to grow up unto David, and he ſhall execute *judgment and righteouſneſs* in the land," or in the earth.*

Great part of the prophecy of Iſaiah, relates to the flouriſhing and happy ſtate of the kingdom of Chriſt, and the proſperity of the church in the latter days. When he foretells the return of the people of Iſrael from the Babyloniſh captivity, which was a type of the deliverance of the church of Chriſt from ſpiritual Babylon, and from all her enemies in this world, viſible and inviſible, he commonly looks forward to the latter, and keeps that in view, and ſays things of it, which are not true of the former, and cannot be applied to it. And as Zion, Jeruſalem, and Judah, and Iſrael,

* Iſai. xxxii. 1. Jer. xxxiii. 15.

Iſrael, were types of the church and kingdom of Chriſt, as including all nations, the former are commonly mentioned only as types, being put for, and ſygnifying the latter. And when the goſpel day, the coming of Chriſt, and his church and kingdom, are brought into view, all that is included in theſe is comprehended; and commonly chief reference is had to the Millennium, or the day of the flouriſhing of the kingdom of Chriſt on earth, which is in a peculiar manner, and eminently the day of ſalvation; and will iſſue in the complete redemption of the church, at and after the day of judgment. He who reads this prophecy with care and diſcerning, will be convinced of the truth of theſe obſervations; and in any other view, great part of it cannot be underſtood.

Only part of the many prophecies of the glory and extent of the kingdom of Chriſt in this world, which are contained in this book, will be now mentioned, as thoſe which are moſt expreſs and clear, with reference to the ſubject in view. They who attentively read this prophecy, will find many more which refer to the ſame event.

"And it ſhall come to paſs in the laſt days, that the mountain of the Lord's houſe ſhall be eſtabliſhed in the top of the mountains, and ſhall be exalted above the hills; and all nations ſhall flow unto it. And many people ſhall go and ſay, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the houſe of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion ſhall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jeruſalem. And he ſhall judge among the nations, and ſhall rebuke many people: And they ſhall beat their ſwords into plowſhares, and their ſpears into pruning hooks: Nation ſhall not lift up ſword againſt nation, neither ſhall they learn war any more."* It is certain, that this prophecy has not been yet fulfilled, except in a very ſmall degree, as the beginning, and firſt fruits of it.

"And there ſhall come forth a rod out of the ſtem of Jeſſe, and a branch ſhall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the Lord ſhall reſt upon him, the ſpirit of wiſdom and underſtanding, the ſpirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord: And ſhall make him of quick underſtanding in the fear of the Lord, and he ſhall not judge after the ſight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears. But with righteouſneſs ſhall he judge the poor, and

* Iſai. ii. 2, 3, 4.

and reprove with equity, for the meek of the earth: And he ſhall ſmite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips ſhall he ſlay the wicked. And righteouſneſs ſhall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulneſs the girdle of his reins. The wolf alſo ſhall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard ſhall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child ſhall lead them. And the cow and the bear ſhall feed; their young ones ſhall lie down together: And the lion ſhall eat ſtraw like the ox. The ſucking child ſhall play on the hole of the aſp, and the weaned child ſhall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They ſhall not hurt nor deſtroy in all my holy mountain: For the earth ſhall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the ſea."*

This is evidently a prophecy of Chriſt, and his kingdom on earth. He ſhall judge and reprove for the meek of the earth, and ſlay all the wicked on earth, that the meek may inherit it; which is exactly agreeable to the forementioned prophecy in the thirty ſeventh Pſalm. "Evil doers ſhall be cut off, and yet a little while and the wicked ſhall not be; but the meek ſhall inherit the earth; and delight themſelves in the abundance of peace." And this univerſal peace and harmony among men, which ſhall take place at that time, is expreſſed in the prophecy before us, in very ſtrong, figurative language; by the wolf dwelling with the lamb, &c.— And the ground and reaſon of this is given. "For the earth ſhall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the ſea." By the knowledge of the Lord is meant true religion, or real chriſtianity, which conſiſts moſt eſſentially in benevolence and goodneſs, as has been ſhown. So far as this takes place, love, peace, and the moſt happy concord and union, are promoted; and every thing contrary to this ſuppreſſed and baniſhed. Therefore, when this ſhall take place univerſally among men, and fill the earth, as the waters cover the ſea, there will be nothing to deſtroy or hurt, but univerſal ſafety, peace and love. No ſuch time has ever been yet known. The true knowledge of God has been ſo far from filling the earth; that groſs darkneſs has covered much the greateſt part of it; and real chriſtianity has been confined to narrow bounds; and but very few of mankind have attained to the character of true chriſtians, even where the goſpel has been publiſhed. And a horrible ſcene of oppreſſion, cruelty, war and murder, has

* Chap. xi. 1—9.

ſpread all over the earth; and will continue to do ſo, until Chriſt ſhall ariſe and ſmite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and ſlay the wicked with the breath of his lips; and cauſe the earth to be filled with the knowledge of God. Such a happy time is yet future, and will certainly come.

The twenty fifth chapter contains a prophecy of the ſame event, ſome of which is worthy to be tranſcribed. "And in this mountain, ſhall the Lord of hoſts make unto *all people* a feaſt of fat things, a feaſt of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will deſtroy in this mountain the face of the covering caſt over *all people*, and the vail that is ſpread over *all nations*. He will ſwallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of his people ſhall he take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath ſpoken it. And it ſhall be ſaid in that day, Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will ſave us: This is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad, and rejoice in his ſalvation."

The goſpel is here repreſented by a rich feaſt; and it is promiſed that all people and nations ſhall have their eyes opened to ſee it; and all reproach, and oppoſition to the church of Chriſt, ſhall be taken away from off all the earth; and there ſhall be univerſal joy in the ſalvation, for which the church has long waited, and which ſhall come in the laſt day.

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, ſaith your God. Speak comfortably to Jeruſalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accompliſhed, that her iniquity is pardoned: For ſhe hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her ſins. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderneſs, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make ſtraight in the deſert a high way for our God. Every valley ſhall be exalted, and every mountain and hill ſhall be made low; and the crooked ſhall be made ſtraight, and the rough places plain. And the glory of the Lord ſhall be revealed, and *all fleſh ſhall ſee it together*: For the mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it."*

This is a prophecy of the times of the goſpel, as it is thus applied in the New Teſtament. It does refer to the firſt introduction and the coming of Chriſt into the world; but is not confined to this: It gives a comprehenſive view of this great ſalvation, and the favour and glory which is to come to the church of Chriſt in this

* Iſai. xl. 1, &c.

this world, and looks forward to the day, when the glory of the Lord ſhall be ſo revealed that all fleſh, that is, all nations, all mankind, ſhall ſee it together. This has not yet been fulfilled; but is to be accompliſhed in a time yet to come, when "The earth ſhall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the ſea."* All that precedes this day is preparatory to it, as the miniſtry of John the baptiſt, was an introduction to it, and more immediately prepared the way for Chriſt.

From the beginning of the fortieth chapter of Iſaiah, to the end of the ſixty ſixth chapter, with which his prophecy cloſes, there is almoſt one continued ſeries of predictions and promiſes of good, ſalvation, happineſs and glory to the church of Chriſt, which have principal reference to the latter day when the Millennium ſhall take place; and when they will have their chief accompliſhment. It will be ſufficient to anſwer the end now propoſed, to mention the following paſſages.

Salvation by Chriſt, is frequently repreſented as actually extended *to the ends of the earth*, which has not yet been accompliſhed. "Look unto me, and be ye ſaved, *all the ends of the earth*; for I am God, and there is none elſe. And he ſaid, It is a light thing that thou ſhouldeſt be my ſervant to raiſe up the tribes of Jacob, and to reſtore the preſerved of Iſrael: I will alſo give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayſt be my ſalvation *unto the end of the earth*. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of *all nations*, and *all the ends of the earth* ſhall ſee the ſalvation of our God."† The ſame phraſe is uſed by the prophet Micah. "And he ſhall ſtand and feed in the ſtrength of the Lord, in the majeſty of the name of the Lord his God, and they ſhall abide: For now ſhall he be great *unto the ends of the earth*."‡

The ſixtieth chapter of Iſaiah, is filled with comfort and promiſes to the church, as alſo are the preceding chapters. The following expreſſions may be particularly noted. "Ariſe, ſhine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is riſen upon thee. For behold the darkneſs ſhall cover the earth, and groſs darkneſs the people; but the Lord ſhall ariſe upon thee, and his glory ſhall be ſeen upon thee. The Gentiles ſhall come to thy light, and kings to thy riſing. Therefore, thy gates ſhall be open continually, they ſhall not be ſhut day nor night, that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be

* Hab. ii. 14. † Iſai. xlv. 22. xlix. 6. lii. 10. ‡ Chap. v. 4.

brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not ſerve thee ſhall periſh: Yea, thoſe nations ſhall be utterly waſted." No ſuch event has been yet. When this ſhall take place, all nations, all mankind, muſt belong to the church; for all others ſhall be *utterly waſted.* The ſame thing is foretold by the Prophet Zechariah.*

The ſixty firſt chapter of Iſaiah, is on the ſame ſubject, and the ſixty ſecond throughout. Upon ſuch promiſes made to the church, ſhe breaks forth into joy and praiſe, in the proſpect of the good that is coming to her. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my ſoul ſhall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of ſalvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteouſneſs, as a bridegroom decketh himſelf with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herſelf with jewels. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden cauſeth the things that are ſown in it to ſpring forth; ſo the Lord God will cauſe righteouſneſs and praiſe to ſpring forth *before all nations.*" "For Zion's ſake, I will not hold my peace, and for Jeruſalem's ſake, I will not reſt, until the righteouſneſs thereof go forth as brightneſs, and the ſalvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles ſhall ſee thy righteouſneſs, and all kings thy glory: And thou ſhalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord ſhall name. I have ſet watchmen upon thy walls, O Jeruſalem, which ſhall never hold their peace day nor night. Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not ſilence, and give him no reſt, till he eſtabliſh, and till he make Jeruſalem *a praiſe in the earth.* Go through, go through the gates; prepare you the way of the people; caſt up, caſt up the highway, gather out the ſtones, lift up a ſtandard for the people. Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed *unto the end of the world,* Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy ſalvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they ſhall call them, The holy people, the redeemed of the Lord: And thou ſhalt be called, Sought out, A city not forſaken."† "Who hath heard ſuch a thing? Who hath ſeen ſuch things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day, or ſhall a nation be born at once? For as ſoon as Zion travailed, ſhe brought forth her children. Shall I bring to the birth, and not cauſe to bring forth? ſaith the Lord. Shall I cauſe to bring forth, and ſhut the womb? ſaith thy God. Rejoice ye with Jeruſalem, and be glad with her, all

* Chap. iii. 14—19. † Chap. lxii. 1, 2, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12.

all ye that love her; rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: That ye may ſuck, and be ſatisfied with the breaſts of her conſolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus ſaith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing ſtream."*

In the prophecy of Jeremiah, the following paſſages are found, which predict the utter abolition of idolatry on earth, and the converſion of all nations to chriſtianity, which events have not yet come to paſs. "At that time they ſhall call Jeruſalem (i. e. the church) the throne of the Lord (i. e. The Lord ſhall reign in and by it.) And all nations ſhall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jeruſalem; (i. e. ſhall become members of the church.) Neither ſhall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart."† They ſhall wholly renounce their idolatry, and all their wickedneſs. "Thus ſhall ye ſay unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they ſhall periſh from the earth, and from under thoſe heavens. They are vanity, and the work of errors. In the time of their viſitation they ſhall periſh."‡ According to this prophecy, this will take place while this earth and the heavens remain, and therefore before the day of judgment.

This ſubject is ſet in a very clear light in the book of Daniel the Prophet. It is there repeatedly declared that the church, or kingdom of Chriſt, ſhall be the laſt kingdom on earth; that it ſhall ſucceed four preceding monarchies, become great, and fill the world, and exiſt in a very happy and glorious ſtate on earth. By the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, and the interpretation of it in the ſecond chapter of Daniel, the kingdom of Chriſt is ſet in this light. The image which Nebuchadnezzar ſaw, repreſents four kingdoms or monarchies, viz. 1. The Babylonian. 2. The Medo Perſian, or that of the Medes and Perſians. 3. The Macedonian or Grecian. 4. The Roman. Theſe are all to paſs away and be deſtroyed, to make way for a fifth kingdom, which ſhall be great, and fill the world; which is deſcribed in the dream, by the following words: "Thou ſaweſt till a ſtone was cut out without hands, which ſmote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and break them in pieces. Then were the iron, the clay, the

* Chap. lxvi. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. † Chap. iii. 17. ‡ Chap. x. 11, 15.

the braſs, the ſilver and gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the ſummer threſhing floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: And the ſtone that ſmote the image became a great mountain, and *filled the whole earth.* This is interpreted by Daniel in the following words: "And in the days of theſe kings ſhall the God of heaven ſet up a kingdom, which ſhall never be deſtroyed: And the kingdom ſhall not be left to other people, but it ſhall break in pieces, and conſume all theſe kingdoms, and it ſhall ſtand forever. For as much as thou ſaweſt that the ſtone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the braſs, the clay, the ſilver and gold, the great God hath made known to the king what ſhall come to paſs hereafter." That this laſt kingdom is the kingdom of Chriſt, there can be no doubt.* The ſame is called in the New Teſtament, "The kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven." This is to ſucceed the kingdom of the Romans, and to fill the whole earth, in which all nations, all mankind will be included. The Roman empire or kingdom, is not yet wholly deſtroyed; therefore what is here predicted of the kingdom of Chriſt is not yet accompliſhed, but ſhall take place in ſome future day. Nothing can be plainer and more certain than this.

In the ſeventh chapter of this book there is a repreſentation of the ſame thing in a viſion which Daniel had. He ſaw the ſame four empires or kingdoms in their ſucceſſion, repreſented by four great, wild, fierce beaſts, coming up from the ſea. The laſt kingdom turned into a little horn which came up laſt; and Daniel "beheld till this fourth beaſt with the little horn was ſlain, and his body deſtroyed, and given to the burning flame." And then the viſion proceeds, "I ſaw in the night viſions, and beheld, one like the Son of man, come with the clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages ſhould ſerve him: His dominion is an everlaſting dominion, which ſhall not paſs away, and his kingdom that which ſhall not be deſtroyed." This viſion is briefly explained to Daniel in the following words: "Theſe great beaſts, which are four, are four kings (i. e. kingdoms) which ſhall ariſe out of the earth. But the ſaints of the Moſt High ſhall take the kingdom, and poſſeſs the kingdom forever, even for-

ever

* See Newton on the Prophecies, vol. I. p. 426, 427, &c.

ever and ever." Daniel requeſted a more particular explanation of the fourth beaſt, and of the ten horns, and of the little horn, "Even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that ſpake very great things, whoſe look was more ſtout than his fellows. And the ſame horn made war with the ſaints and prevailed againſt them; until the ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the ſaints of the Moſt High; and the time came that the ſaints poſſeſſed the kingdom." And he is then told, "That the fourth beaſt ſhall be the fourth kingdom upon earth. And the ten horns out of this kingdom, are ten kings that ſhall ariſe: And another ſhall riſe after them, and he ſhall be diverſe from the firſt, and he ſhall ſubdue three kings. And he ſhall ſpeak great words againſt the Moſt High, and ſhall wear out the ſaints of the Moſt High, and think to change times and laws: And they ſhall be given into his hand, until a time, and times, and the dividing of time. But the judgment ſhall ſit, and they ſhall take away his dominion, to conſume and to deſtroy it to the end. *And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatneſs of the kingdom under the whole heaven, ſhall be given to the people of the ſaints of the Moſt High*, whoſe kingdom is an everlaſting kingdom, and all dominions ſhall ſerve and obey him."

As in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, ſo in this viſion, the fifth and laſt kingdom, is the kingdom of Chriſt, conſiſting wholly of ſaints. It is Jeſus Chriſt whom Daniel ſaw, "And behold, one like to the Son of man, came with the clouds of heaven. And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages ſhould ſerve him." His kingdom and dominion is univerſal, including all the inhabitants of the earth. And theſe ſhall be all ſaints or holy perſons; as no others can be the proper ſubjects of this kingdom. "The ſaints of the Moſt High ſhall take the kingdom, and poſſeſs the kingdom forever. And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatneſs of the kingdom under the whole heaven, ſhall be given to the people of the ſaints of the Moſt High." The ſtrongeſt expreſſions are uſed and repeated, to aſſert the univerſality of this kingdom, comprehending all mankind who ſhall then live on earth. And it is repeatedly declared, that this kingdom ſhall ſtand forever. It ſhall not be deſtroyed by any ſucceeding power or kingdom, as the former kingdoms were, but ſhall continue to the end of the world, and then be removed to heaven, to a more perfect and glorious ſtate; and there exiſt and flouriſh in the higheſt perfection forever and ever.

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The little horn which was on the beaſt, and deſtroyed with the beaſt, whoſe body was given to the burning flame, is the Pope of Rome, with the kingdom and power, civil and eccleſiaſtical, of which he is the head.* This beaſt with this horn, is not yet deſtroyed. When this is done, the kingdom and power of ſin and ſatan in the world will fall; and then the kingdom of Chriſt will riſe and fill the world, as is predicted here, and in the ſecond chapter of this book. This is very evident by theſe prophecies, if there were no other; but this truth is greatly illuſtrated and eſtabliſhed, by thoſe predictions of the ſame event which have been conſidered; and more ſo, by thoſe which are yet to be mentioned.

The Prophet Micah predicted the proſperity of the church of Chriſt, and the prevalence of his intereſt and kingdom *in the laſt days.*† And there is a particular prophecy of the ſame event by Zephaniah.‡ This is alſo particularly foretold by Zechariah: "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midſt of thee, ſaith the Lord. And many nations ſhall be joined to the Lord in that day, and ſhall be my people; and I will dwell in the midſt of thee."§ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; ſhout, O daughter of Jeruſalem! Behold thy king cometh unto thee: He is juſt, and having ſalvation, lowly, and riding upon an aſs, and upon a colt the ſole of an aſs. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horſe from Jeruſalem, and the battle bow ſhall be cut off; and he ſhall ſpeak peace unto the heathen: *And his dominion ſhall be from ſea even to ſea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.*"‖ The whole of the fourteenth chapter relates chiefly to this great event, and happy time; of which only the following words will be tranſcribed. "And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, that the light ſhall not be clear, and dark. But it ſhall be *one day*, which ſhall be known to the Lord, not day and night: But it ſhall come to paſs, that at evening time it ſhall be light. And it ſhall be in that day, that living waters ſhall go out from Jeruſalem: Half of them toward the former ſea, and half of them toward the hinder ſea: In ſummer and in winter it ſhall be. And the Lord ſhall be king over all the earth. In that day there ſhall be one Lord, and his name one."

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* This is abundantly proved in Newton's Diſſertation on the Prophecies, vol. I. page 441—498.

† Chap. iv. 1—4. v. 1—4.

‡ Chap. iii. 8, to the end of the chapter.

§ Chap. ii. 10, 11.

‖ Chap. ix. 9, 10.

This is a prophecy of the Millennium ſtate, in figurative language. Then, in the moral world, the church, there ſhall be no night or darkneſs; no change of day and night, as there was before, when the church was in a ſtate of affliction, when her days of proſperity were ſhort, and ſoon ſucceeded by darkneſs and night of degeneracy and affliction: But at the time when night uſed to come on, it ſhall be day; ſo that it ſhall be conſtantly light and day, and the enjoyment of proſperity, light and holineſs, without interruption. And there ſhall be a conſtant flow of living waters, without any interruption, into all parts of the earth, among all nations; that is ſpiritual bleſſings, conſiſting in ſpiritual life, holy joy and happineſs. And then all idolatry and falſe worſhip ſhall be wholly aboliſhed; and Chriſt ſhall reign in all the earth, and all nations ſhall truſt in him, and obey him. This prediction agrees exactly with all thoſe which have been mentioned, pointing out the ſame important glorious event.

THE prophecies in the New Teſtament, foretold the univerſal ſpread of chriſtianity, until all nations ſhall become the ſervants of Chriſt; and that Chriſt and his people ſhall reign on earth a thouſand years; when ſatan ſhall be caſt out of the earth, and his ſubjects and kingdom ſhall be deſtroyed; agreeable to the numerous prophecies in the Old Teſtament, which have been mentioned.

Jeſus Chriſt has foretold this, by the following parables.—"Another parable put he forth unto them, ſaying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of muſtard ſeed, which a man took and ſowed in his field. Which indeed is the leaſt of all ſeeds: But when it is grown, it is the greateſt among herbs, and becometh a tree; ſo that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. Another parable ſpake he unto them, The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three meaſures of meal, till the whole was leavened."* By the firſt of thoſe parables Chriſt teaches, that his church and kingdom, though ſmall in the beginning of it, ſhould increaſe and become great in the world. In the next, he makes an advance, and more fully predicts the univerſal extent of this kingdom; that the goſpel ſhall not ceaſe to ſpread and influence the world, till all mankind, living on earth, the whole world, ſhall be formed by it, and imbibe

* Matth. xiii. 31, 32, 33.

the ſpirit of it; ſo as to become the children of this kingdom. If the kingdom of heaven ſhall not finally prevail and extend to all nations, and fill the whole world, how can this parable be a juſt or true repreſentation of it? In this view of it, it agrees exactly with many of the prophecies which have been mentioned; and with others, which are yet to be conſidered.

Agreeable to this, are the following words of Chriſt, in which indeed he aſſerts the ſame thing, "Now is the judgment of this world: Now ſhall the prince of this world be caſt out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."*— What is here foretold by Chriſt, is not yet accompliſhed, except in a very ſmall part, as the firſt fruits and pledge of the whole.— A foundation for this was laid in the death of Chriſt, when he was lifted up on the croſs; but the prince of this world, the devil, is not yet caſt out of the world; nor has Chriſt yet drawn all men unto him. Chriſt has drawn great numbers to him, who have become his faithful ſubjects and ſervants, and has made great inroads upon the intereſt and kingdom of the prince of this world; but very few of mankind, compared with the whole, have been drawn to Chriſt; by far the greateſt number even in the chriſtian world, have rejected and oppoſed him; and the kingdom of ſatan has been great and ſtrong, including the moſt of men who have lived in the world, from the time in which theſe words were ſpoken by Chriſt, to this day. Both of theſe events are therefore yet future, and the former is to make way for the latter; or rather one is included in the other. The ſame things which are here foretold, are predicted in different words, in the twentieth chapter of the Revelation, which will be conſidered. When Chriſt ſays, He will draw *all men* unto him, he does not mean that every one of mankind ſhall come unto him; for this is contrary to known fact; and to many expreſs declarations of Chriſt. But that in conſequence of his death, the kingdom of ſatan ſhall be utterly deſtroyed on earth, and then all nations, even all men then in the world, ſhall become his voluntary ſubjects, and believe in him.

This was ſuited to ſupport and comfort his diſciples and friends at that time, when he had been ſpeaking of his own death as at hand, in the view of the glory that ſhould follow his dying on the croſs: and ſerved to explain what was ſpoken by the voice from heaven,

* John xii. 31, 32.

heaven, in anſwer to his petition, "Father, glorify thy name."—"I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."*

What the Apoſtle Paul ſays in the eleventh chapter of his epiſtle to the Romans, of the Jews and Gentiles, which comprehend all mankind, holds forth this ſame truth. He there ſpeaks of the Jews who were then, the moſt of them, broken off from the church by unbelief, as yet to come into the kingdom of Chriſt, even all of them, which he terms their *fulneſs*. And he ſays, that when they ſhall in their fulneſs be brought in, the fulneſs of the Gentiles ſhall come in alſo. The fulneſs of the Jews, and the fulneſs of the Gentiles, muſt include the whole of all nations. And he ſpeaks of what had taken place in the days of the Apoſtles, in the converſion of Jews and Gentiles, as only the firſt fruits, the root, foundation and beginning, of the whole lump, and the tree which were to follow in the coming in of the Jews and Gentiles, of the whole world, in the fulneſs thereof.†

This leads to recollect the many prophecies by the ancient Prophets, of the reſtoration of the Jews to a ſtate of holineſs and happineſs, in the laſt days, which has not yet come to paſs, ſome of which it may be proper to mention here, as they ſerve to confirm the point under conſideration. The thirty fourth, thirty ſixth, and thirty ſeventh chapters of Ezekiel, relate chiefly to this event. Though the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, may be implied in this prophecy, and ſome expreſſions may have particular reference to that; yet it evidently looks farther, to a deliverance and ſalvation, of which their return from Babylon was a type or pledge: And there are many things predicted, which cannot be applied to the former, and were not true of it. Particularly the following: "I will ſet up one ſhepherd over them, and he ſhall feed them, even my ſervant David: And he ſhall feed them, and he ſhall be their ſhepherd. One king ſhall be king to them all. And I will cleanſe them, ſo ſhall they be my people, and I will be their God. And David, my ſervant, ſhall be king over them, and they all ſhall have one ſhepherd. They ſhall alſo walk in my judgments, and obſerve my ſtatutes, and do them. And they ſhall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my ſervant, wherein your fathers have dwelt, and they ſhall dwell therein, even they and their children, and their childrens'

* Verſe 28. † Verſes 12, 16, 25.

children forever, and my ſervant David, ſhall be their prince forever."* By David, Jeſus Chriſt the Son of David is meant, as the former was an eminent type of the latter. Therefore this muſt refer to their reſtoration and happy ſtate under Chriſt, which is certainly not yet come; but will take place, when there ſhall be one fold, and one ſhepherd, and Jews and Gentiles ſhall be united in one church under the Redeemer, which, after the Millennium, ſhall be tranſplanted from earth to heaven; where the ſpiritual David will reign over it forever.

The ſame is foretold by the Prophet Hoſea. "The children of Iſrael ſhall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a ſacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Afterward ſhall the children of Iſrael return, and ſeek the Lord their God, and David their king, and ſhall fear the Lord, and his goodneſs in the latter days."†— The children of Iſrael are now in the ſtate here deſcribed, without a king, and without a prince; without a ſacrifice; for their temple is deſtroyed, and they cannot go to Jeruſalem, and their law forbids them to ſacrifice in any other place. They are without an image, without an ephod and teraphim; for they have a great and obſtinate averſion from all kinds of idolatry, to which they were once ſo much addicted. They have been a long time, many days, in this ſtate, and will continue ſo, until they return, and ſeek Jeſus Chriſt their king, and ſubmit to him, which is yet to come.

Theſe prophecies, and others of the ſame kind, if they be conſidered as having reference to the Jews excluſively, and not including the whole church of Chriſt, in the latter day, compoſed of Jews and Gentiles, do prove that there is yet to be a time, when the church of Chriſt ſhall be univerſal, and include all nations: For it appears from what St. Paul ſays, that when thoſe prophecies ſhall be fulfilled to the Jews, the fulneſs of the Gentiles will alſo come in, and all men in every nation will be ſubject to Chriſt, and his kingdom ſhall be glorious, and fill the world. And in this ſenſe "All Iſrael ſhall be ſaved."

In the revelation made by Jeſus Chriſt to the Apoſtle John, the final victory and triumph of the church on earth, over all her enemies, and the happy ſtate to which it will be brought, which ſhall continue

* Chap. xxxiv. 23. xxxvii. 22, 23, 24, 25. † Chap. iii. 4, 5.

continue a thouſand years, is, in ſome reſpects, more clearly ſet forth, than in the preceding prophecies; by which they are illuſtrated, and their meaning is more fully fixed and confirmed. Here the general ſtate and circumſtances of the church, from the time when the revelation was given, to this time, and down to the end of the world, are predicted. Here the afflictions and perſecutions, through which the church ſhould paſs; the reſpite which ſhe ſhould have, and victory over the perſecuting power of heathen Rome, in the days of Conſtantine; the grand apoſtacy which ſhould take place in the church by the riſe of the Pope, and the hierarchy of the falſe church of Rome; the groſs idolatry which ſhould be practiſed in that church; and the violent oppoſition of this power to the true followers of Chriſt; their cruel perſecutions of them, and ſhedding their blood, for a thouſand two hundred and ſixty years; the judgments that ſhould be executed on that corrupt church and her adherents, and on the whole world, for their obſtinacy in wickedneſs; and the final overthrow of the Pope and all who ſupport him, and of the kingdom of ſatan in the world, and the deliverance of the church of Chriſt into a ſtate of reſt and peace, when this kingdom of Chriſt ſhall increaſe and ſpread, and fill the world; and continue in this happy ſtate on earth a thouſand years: All this is foretold; much of which is already come to paſs; but the moſt happy and glorious events are yet to come. The great and remarkable things which have come to paſs, as they were foretold, are a ſtanding, inconteſtible evidence and demonſtration, that the prophecies in this book are from heaven: For it is as certain, that none but the omniſcient God can know and predict ſuch events, which take place according to the prediction, as it is that this world was made by him. And the events which are come to paſs, and are now taking place in the world before our eyes, agreeable to the prophecies in this book, at the ſame time that they prove that thoſe predictions are from God, are alſo a pledge and aſſurance, that the prophecies of things not yet come, will be fulfilled in due ſeaſon.

The ſubject now in hand, will lead more particularly to conſider what are the prophecies in this book, which relate to the future proſperity of the church and kingdom of Chriſt in this world, in which all the darkneſs and afflictions which do attend it, being oppreſſed and trodden down by enemies, while they prevail

and

and triumph, ſhall iſſue; and to ſhow that ſuch a day is certainly coming, according to the predictions which are to be found here.

In the fifth chapter of the Revelation, the four and twenty elders, who repreſent the church, appear rejoicing and praiſing Chriſt in the proſpect of their reigning on the earth. "And they ſung a new ſong, ſaying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the ſeals thereof: For thou waſt ſlain, and haſt redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and haſt made us unto our God kings and prieſts: *And we ſhall reign on the earth.*" This is ſpoken of *the church*, and is not literally true of every particular member of it, that then actually exiſted in heaven, or on earth. When the church ſhall reign on earth, conſiſting of the numerous members who ſhall then exiſt in this world; all thoſe who are gone out of the world, and are in heaven, will reign in and with the church on earth, as members of the ſame ſociety and kingdom; and will partake in all the joy and glory of this event, in a much higher degree than if they were perſonally on earth: They will reign in their ſucceſſors, who repreſent them, and in the prevalence, victory and triumph of that cauſe, which is theirs, and in which they lived and died. But this will be more particularly conſidered hereafter.

"And the ſeventh angel ſounded, and there were great voices in heaven, ſaying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Chriſt, and he ſhall reign forever and ever."* Here it is aſſerted, that under the ſeventh trumpet, which contains all the events from the time of its ſounding, to the end of the world, all the nations and kingdoms in this world ſhall become one kingdom, under Chriſt, and ſhall be wholly ſwallowed up in this kingdom, which ſhall not be ſucceeded or give place to any other kingdom; but ſhall ſtand forever. It ſhall continue the only kingdom on earth to the end of the world, and exiſt forever in heaven. Which is perfectly agreeable to many other prophecies which have been mentioned. The meaning is not, that this event ſhall follow immediately upon the ſounding of the ſeventh trumpet; but that this is comprehended in the events of this trumpet, to which all the preceding have reſpect, and in which they ſhall iſſue, as the moſt important and glorious event,

* Chap. x. 15.

event, to which all the inhabitants of heaven were attending, and in the proſpect of which they had peculiar joy.

The ſame event is celebrated in heaven, as having actually taken place, in the former part of the nineteenth chapter. "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, ſaying, Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth: Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herſelf ready. And to her was granted, that ſhe ſhould be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: For the fine linen is the righteouſneſs of ſaints. And he ſaid unto me, Write, Bleſſed are they who are called unto the marriage ſupper of the Lamb. And he ſaith unto me, Theſe are the true ſayings of God." Here the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is repreſented as reigning, as he never had done before; which is the ſame event which is ſo often predicted in the Pſalms, and by the Prophets, eſpecially by Daniel, by the Lord's reigning, that is Chriſt. And which is mentioned and celebrated in the tenth chapter; and in the twentieth chapter; "And I ſaw thrones, and they ſat upon them, and judgment was given unto them, and they lived and reigned with Chriſt a thouſand years." By the bride having made herſelf ready, and being arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, is meant the eminent degree of holineſs and moral beauty, to which the church will arrive at that day, in the Millennium ſtate. This is repreſented as taking place upon the fall of antichriſt, and the great whore, the falſe idolatrous church of Rome. And it ſucceeds the overthrow of ſatan's kingdom in the world, and not only the deſtruction of the Roman empire under antichriſt, but of all the nations of wicked men; which is deſcribed in the ſixteenth chapter, verſe ſeventeenth, &c.

And the ſame event is again repreſented in the latter part of the nineteenth chapter, and in the beginning of the twentieth. "And I ſaw heaven opened, and behold, a white horſe: And he that ſat upon him was called faithful and true, and in righteouſneſs he doth judge and make war." From the following deſcription it appears, that this perſon is Jeſus Chriſt prepared, and going forth to deſtroy his enemies on earth. And an angel is ſeen ſtanding in the ſun, in the moſt conſpicuous place, calling with a loud voice upon all the fowls of the air to come "to the ſupper of the great God,"

to

to eat the fleſh of kings and captains, &c. and the fleſh of *all men*, both free and bond, both ſmall and great. And he ſaw the beaſt and the kings of the earth, and their armies *gathered together*, to make war againſt him that ſat on the horſe, and againſt his army." And the beaſt and falſe prophet were deſtroyed by him; and the remnant of thoſe who joined with the beaſt and were enemies to Chriſt, were ſlain by him. This battle, and the deſtruction of the enemies of Chriſt, does not follow in time, and is not to take place after the events mentioned in the firſt part of this chapter, viz. the joy and praiſe in heaven, upon the reigning of Chriſt on earth, and the bride, the Lamb's wife, making herſelf ready, &c. but is a repeated and more particular repreſentation of what is to precede that happy event, which had been before mentioned in the ſixteenth chapter, from the thirteenth verſe to the end of it. There the kings of the earth, and the whole world, are ſaid to be *gathered together to battle*; "The battle of the great day of God Almighty." So here "The beaſt and the kings of the earth, and their armies, are *gathered together to make war* againſt him that ſat on the horſe." And there the battle is deſcribed as coming on, upon the pouring out of the ſeventh vial, and great Babylon, which is the ſame with the beaſt, and the falſe prophet, and all the enemies of Chriſt, are deſtroyed in battle. Which is exactly parallel with the war and battle of which there is a more particular deſcription in the nineteenth chapter, and muſt be one and the ſame event. This is confirmed, by what immediately follows this deſtruction of the enemies of Chriſt, in the beginning of the twentieth chapter, which, as has been obſerved, is the ſame event with that deſcribed in the nineteenth chapter by the marriage of the Lamb, whoſe bride, that is the church, was made ready, and arrayed in fine linen, clean and white. A more particular and remarkable deſcription of this ſame thing, in the twentieth chapter, is in the following words.

"And I ſaw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomleſs pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old ſerpent, which is the devil and ſatan, and bound him a thouſand years, and caſt him into the bottomleſs pit, and ſhut him up, and ſet a ſeal upon him, that he ſhould deceive the nations no more, till the thouſand years ſhould be fulfilled: And after that, he muſt be looſed a little ſeaſon. And I ſaw thrones, and they ſat upon them, and judgment was given unto them.

them. And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands: And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. On such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

A particular explanation of this passage of scripture will be attempted in the next section. That it does express and confirm the truth which is contained in the numerous prophecies which have been mentioned, and which is set up to be proved in this section, the following observations will show.

1. This event here predicted, is to take place after the overthrow of the Roman antichristian kingdom, and the destruction of all the enemies of Christ and his church on earth. This is evident from the account of the destruction of these in the prophecy immediately preceding these words, and upon which the glorious scene opened in this passage, is to take place. And the same is predicted in the last part of the sixteenth chapter, as has been shown. This is agreeable to the prophecies of the same event, in the Psalms, and by Daniel, and others, viz. that the time of the reign of Christ, and of the saints on earth, shall succeed the destruction of the wicked, and the total overthrow of all the preceding kingdoms and powers in the world, which has been from time to time observed upon them, when they were transcribed. And in this very passage, satan himself is represented as bound, and cast out of the earth, and shut up in the bottomless pit, antecedent to the reign of Christ, and his followers, in the world; which necessarily implies the total ruin of his cause and kingdom on earth, and the extirpation of all the wicked, who are his children and servants. Therefore, the time here predicted, is not yet come.

2. All this is to take place before the end of the world, and the day of judgment. This is very evident and certain, since it is said, that when this happy time of a thousand years is ended, satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth: And then, after this, Christ is represented as coming to judgment, of which

there is a particular account; and of the final and eternal deſtruction of all his enemies.

3. Chriſt is here ſaid to reign, and his ſaints to reign with him, which, without any doubt, is the ſame event, and the ſame period, which is foretold by Daniel and other Prophets, as a moſt happy and joyful time, when that nation and thoſe men who will not ſerve Jeſus Chriſt, ſhall be deſtroyed; and there ſhall be given to him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages ſhould ſerve him. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatneſs of the kingdom under the whole heaven, ſhall be given to the ſaints of the Moſt High, and all dominions ſhall ſerve him. And the extent and univerſality of the kingdom of Chriſt, and of thoſe who reign with him, as including all nations and all men, is ſuppoſed and implied in his binding ſatan and caſting him out, "that he ſhould *deceive the nations no more*, till the thouſand years ſhould be fulfilled." Satan is ſaid to deceive the whole world.* And when he is caſt out of the whole world, Jeſus Chriſt and his people will take poſſeſſion of it, and reign in all the earth.

4. Chriſt and his people are to reign on earth A THOUSAND YEARS.† All have not been agreed in the length of time denoted here by a thouſand years. Some have ſuppoſed that a thouſand years, is uſed indefinitely, not to expreſs any preciſe number of years, but a great number of years, or a long time. But this cannot reaſonably be admitted as the ſenſe of the expreſſion here, ſince this preciſe number of years, is mentioned ſix times in this paſſage, which appears inconſiſtent with its being uſed in ſuch an indefinite, vague ſenſe. And beſides, there is nothing in the connection here, or in the nature or circumſtances of the caſe, to lead any one to underſtand this number, as put indefinitely.

There are others who ſuppoſe, that theſe are to be underſtood to be a thouſand prophetical years, that is, as many years as there are days in a thouſand literal years, a day being put for a year.—According to this way of reckoning, a thouſand years are put for three hundred and ſixty thouſand years; for in that age, a year was reckoned to conſiſt of three hundred and ſixty days. It is ſaid, that in this book of Revelation, a day is conſtantly put for a year. A thouſand, two hundred and ſixty days, mean ſo many years,

* Chap. xii. 9. † Hence this time is called the MILLENNIUM, which ſignifies a thouſand years.

years, and forty two months, mean as many years, as there are days in ſo many months, reckoning thirty days to each month, as they then did; which therefore amount to the ſame number of years, i. e. one thouſand, two hundred and ſixty years. And a time and times, and half a time, i. e. three years and an half, mean as many years as there are days in three years and an half; which are juſt as many as there are in forty two months; that is, one thouſand, two hundred and ſixty years. It is therefore concluded, that theſe thouſand years, muſt be underſtood in the ſame way; that is, that a day is put for a year; which will amount to three hundred and ſixty thouſand years.

It is acknowledged that this ſuppoſition is ſupported by ſome colour of argument, and plauſibility: But there are objections to it, ſome of which will be mentioned.

1. It does by no means follow that theſe are prophetical years, in the ſenſe mentioned, becauſe a day is put for a year, in other places in this prophecy. There may be reaſons for putting a day for a year, in other inſtances; and yet there be no reaſon for putting a thouſand years for as many years as there are days in a thouſand years, in this inſtance; and therefore no reaſon for underſtanding them ſo. And a day is not put for a year in every other inſtance in this book. The dead bodies of the two witneſſes are ſaid to lie in the ſtreet of the city, three days and an half,* which do not mean three years and an half, as no event reſpecting them can be made conſiſtent with ſuch a meaning.

2. The number, *a thouſand years*, being repeated ſo many times in one ſhort paragraph, ſeems to be a reaſon that it is to be underſtood literally, for juſt ſo many years, and not ſo many prophetical years. Eſpecially, as there is nothing in this caſe to lead us to underſtand it in the latter ſenſe; but it may, as conſiſtently with every thing in this book, and this prophecy in particular, and more ſo, as will be now obſerved, be underſtood literally. And it is farther to be obſerved, that there is no inſtance in this book, or in the whole Bible, where a preciſe number is ſo often repeated in the ſame words, that is not to be underſtood literally.

3. It ſeems to be out of all proper proportion, to ſuppoſe there will be ſo long a time as three hundred and ſixty thouſand years of proſperity and happineſs, and of great and univerſal holineſs in this world, the habitation of an apoſtate, ſinful race of men; and

* Chap. xi. 11.

but ſix thouſand years of evil times. And this does not appear conſiſtent with this world being repreſented as an *evil world*, as it is in the ſcripture: Or with its being curſed in conſequence of man's rebellion. One thouſand years may be an exception out of ſeven thouſand, in which the curſe may be mitigated, and in a great meaſure removed; and yet, on the whole, or the whole taken together, it may be conſidered and called, an evil and accurſed world, for man's ſake. But if there were to be only ſix thouſand years of evil and the curſe, and three hundred and ſixty thouſand years of good and a bleſſing, it would not, on the whole, be an evil or curſed, but a happy and bleſſed world.

4. It has been obſerved, that the natural world is evidently a deſigned type or ſhadow of the moral world, eſpecially of the redemption by Chriſt. And that creating it in ſix days, and then reſting on the ſeventh, is deſigned to be a type of bringing the moral world in the work of redemption, to a ſtate of reſt; that there are to be ſix thouſand years in which every thing with reſpect to redemption and the kingdom of Chriſt, is to be done and prepared, for a ſeventh thouſand years of peace and reſt, and joy in this glorious work. And it will be ſhown in the ſequel, that there are inſtitutions in the Moſaic ritual, which point out the ſame thing. The Apoſtle Peter ſeems to allude to this, when ſpeaking of the coming of Chriſt, and the end of the world. "But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thouſand years, and a thouſand years as one day. The Lord is not ſlack concerning his promiſe; but the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night," &c.* Hence the conſtant revolution of weeks, conſiſting of ſeven days, is an emblem of the revolution of time, which will come to an end, when the world has exiſted ſeven thouſand years. And there has been a tradition among both Jews and Chriſtians, agreeable to this ſentiment.†—

Now,

* 2 Peter iii. 8, 9, 10.

† "There is an old tradition both among Jews and Chriſtians, that at the end of ſix thouſand years, the Meſſiah ſhall come, and the world ſhall be renewed, the reign of the wicked one ſhall ceaſe, and the reign of the ſaints upon earth ſhall begin." Newton's Diſſertations on the Prophecies. Vol. I. Page 490.—And again, Vol. III. Page 410.—"According to tradition, theſe thouſand years of the reign of Chriſt and the ſaints, will be the ſeventh millennary of the world; for as God created the world in ſix days, and reſted on the ſeventh, ſo the world, it is argued, will continue ſix thouſand years, and the ſeventh thouſand

Now, this ſentiment and tradition ſuppoſe, that the thouſand years of the Millennium, is but one literal thouſand years, or the ſeventh part of the time in which the world is to ſtand. And as far as there is any weight in them, oppoſe and overthrow the notion that the world will not come to an end, till it has exiſted three hundred and ſixty thouſand years, after the Millennium ſhall begin.

5. All the ends of ſuch a day of peace and proſperity, of victory, triumph and ſalvation to the church on earth, and of the ſo much celebrated reign of Chriſt with his ſaints, in this world, will be fully anſwered in a literal thouſand years, ſo far as it can be learned what they are, from ſcripture; or man can conceive them to be; as much and as fully anſwered, as they could be in hundreds of thouſands of years, or in any ſuppoſed length of time.

Satan will be as much defeated, and his kingdom and intereſt wholly deſtroyed in the world; the cauſe of wickedneſs, and evil men, will be entirely ruined and loſt, and they all baniſhed from the earth. The wiſdom, power, grace, truth and faithfulneſs of Chriſt will have a proper and glorious manifeſtation, by introducing ſuch a ſtate, and continuing it as long as is moſt for his glory, and the beſt good of his church, though it ſhall continue but a thouſand years. The church may have all the reward and enjoyment in that time, that it is proper or deſirable that it ſhould have on earth; and it may be wiſeſt and beſt, then to take it to a more perfect, happy and glorious ſtate in heaven. A thouſand years will be time enough for Chriſt to ſhow what he can do, in bringing good out of evil, and vindicating his cauſe and church, and triumphing glorioufly over all oppoſition from earth and hell, and filling the world with his powerful preſence and kingdom, with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord; with holineſs and happineſs. There will be full opportunity in this time, to ſhow and demonſtrate, from fact and abundant experience, what is the nature, beauty and excellence of chriſtianity; that it is exactly ſuited to form the world into a ſtate of love, union and happineſs; and that all the preceding evils among mankind have been chiefly owing to ignorance or neglect of Chriſt, and the true ſpirit of chriſtianity, and oppoſition to thoſe in life or heart, or both. And this will be time enough to ſhow, that all means are ineffectual to reclaim

ſand will be the great *ſabbatiſm*, or holy reſt, to the people of God: *One day is with the Lord as a thouſand years, and a thouſand years as one day.*"—2 Peter iii. 8.

reclaim man from ſin; and that this can be effected by nothing but the ſpirit of God, poured down in plentiful effuſions; and to give a ſample and foretaſte of the beauty, happineſs and glory of the holy ſociety and redeemed church in heaven.

And in this thouſand years the work of redemption, and ſalvation, may be fully accompliſhed, in the utmoſt extent and glory of it. In this time, in which the world will be ſoon filled with real chriſtians, and continue full, by conſtant propagation, to ſupply the place of thoſe who will leave the world; there will be many thouſands born and live on earth, to each one that had been born and lived in the preceding ſix thouſand years. So that if they who ſhall be born in that thouſand years, ſhall be all, or moſt of them, ſaved, as they will be, there will, on the whole, be many thouſands of mankind ſaved, to one that ſhall be loſt.*

The only end that can be imagined would be anſwered by protracting this time of the proſperity of the church in this world, is, that greater numbers of mankind might exiſt, and be ſaved. But that this is really deſirable or beſt, all things conſidered, there is not the leaſt evidence. A deſire that more of mankind ſhould be ſaved than will be ſaved, in a thouſand years of the prevalence of holineſs and ſalvation, in all the families of the earth, never could be ſatisfied: For though three hundred and ſixty thouſand years ſhould be added, and all ſhould be ſaved who lived in that time; ſtill, for the ſame reaſon that this is deſired, it will be equally deſirable, and more ſo, that the time of ſalvation ſhould be lengthened out yet longer; and ſo on without end. This reaſon for making the time longer, that more may be ſaved, cannot ceaſe; and a deſire of more time, on this ground, or for this reaſon, is like the four things which Solomon mentions as never ſatisfied, and ſay not it is enough. It is moſt wiſe and beſt, that a certain number and proportion of mankind ſhould be ſaved: And God only knows what this number is, how great, and what proportion it bears to the whole human race. And no man has any reaſon to think, that this number will not be compleated within a literal thouſand years, after the Millennium commences. Nor can there be the leaſt evidence from any quarter, that it will not, unleſs there be evidence that the Millennium contains a longer time; which is the queſtion under conſideration. And it is ſuppoſed that

* See Bellamy's Sermon on the Millennium.

that no evidence of this has yet been produced, or can be at present: And it is certain, that the ſalvation of more of mankind, were the time to be longer, is no reaſon why it ſhould be longer. But this will be beſt, and moſt infallibly decided by the event which will take place in due ſeaſon: Which perhaps cannot be determined with certainty now, or ſo that all ſhall be ſatisfied and agreed in the matter. And it may not be wiſe to be very confident on either ſide of the queſtion.

THE evidence has now been produced from ſcripture, that there is a time coming, in which the cauſe of Chriſt ſhall prevail in this world; and his kingdom ſpread and fill the earth, as it has never yet done; in which time, the church and people of Chriſt ſhall come to a ſtate of peace and proſperity; when the kingdom of ſatan ſhall be utterly deſtroyed; and all wicked men ſhall be put down, and caſt out of the earth, and there ſhall be none to deſtroy, hurt or oppoſe the truth and ways of Chriſt, or his people: And this happy, glorious day ſhall laſt a thouſand years.

This is foretold, not by one ſingle prophecy, but is repeatedly and abundantly mentiond in the ſacred, prophetic writings, and repreſented by a variety of ſtrong expreſſions, and by different ſimilitudes, and in figurative language: And yet all perfectly agree to point out the ſame thing. And there are many prophecies of the ſame event, by Iſaiah, and in other parts of the Bible, which have not been particularly mentioned.

Nothing has yet taken place in favour of the church of Chriſt, and in oppoſition to his enemies, which is in any meaſure anſwerable to theſe predictions. By far the greater part of mankind have been in a ſtate of ignorance of chriſtianity, or of oppoſition to it, ever ſince the goſpel has been preached to men; and ſatan has had a greater and ſtronger kingdom on earth, than Chriſt, moſt of the time ſince his aſcenſion. And ſin, and real oppoſition to Chriſt, in principle and practice, have abounded in every age, even among nominal chriſtians. The overthrow of the Jews by the Romans, and the conſequent ſpread of chriſtianity among the Gentiles, were events favourable to the church of Chriſt, and were a pledge and type of what he will yet do, in overthrowing his enemies and delivering his church, in the latter days. And ſo was the overthrow of heathen Rome, and the ſpread and prevalence of chriſtianity through all the Roman empire, in the days

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of the Emperor Conſtantine, in the fourth century. But this was of ſhort continuance, and within twenty years the church fell into a ſtate of great calamity, by diviſions, contentions, and hereſies; and the empire was involved in confuſion and war. And from that time to this, the church has been in a low, afflicted ſtate. The many promiſes made to Iſrael by the prophets, of reſtoration to a long abiding ſtate of obedience, holineſs and proſperity, have not been in any meaſure fulfilled to that nation, nor to the church, including Jews and Gentiles, repreſented and typified by Iſrael, Jeruſalem, Mount Zion, &c. If ſuch a day of proſperity of the church of Chriſt, comprehending Jews and Gentiles, and all nations, were not yet to come, great part of the prophecies in the Bible could have but a very low and little meaning, and would be in a great meaſure, if not wholly, uſeleſs: Whereas, if they be underſtood according to the moſt natural, plain import of them, they open a moſt pleaſing, wonderful ſcene, ſuited to ſupport and animate the chriſtian, and fill him with gratitude and joy, on the agreeable proſpect.

It appears reaſonable and deſirable, that Jeſus Chriſt, who ſuffered ſhame and reproach in this world, and was condemned and put to death as a malefactor, by men, ſhould have this reproach wiped off in the ſight of all men, and that the cauſe in which he ſuffered and died, ſhould prevail and be victorious in this ſame world, where he ſuffered and died: That he ſhould, agreeably to ancient prophecies, be here on earth, "Exalted, and extolled, and be very high. As many were aſtoniſhed at him (his viſage was ſo marred more than any man, and his form more than the ſons of men) ſo ſhall he ſprinkle many nations, and kings ſhall ſhut their mouths at him: For that which had not been told them ſhall they ſee; and that which they had not heard, ſhall they conſider. He ſhall ſee of the travail of his ſoul, and ſhall be ſatisfied. He ſhall divide the ſpoil with the ſtrong; becauſe he hath poured out his ſoul unto death; and was numbered with the tranſgreſſors."*

And it appears very deſirable, that the enemies of Chriſt and his church, ſhould meet with diſappointment, be defeated and confounded in this world, and that the reproach which has been caſt upon the church ſhould be removed: That the church ſhould put on her beautiful garments, and ſhine in the true beauties of chriſtianity;

* Iſai. lii. 13, 14, 15. liii. 11, 12.

chriſtianity: That it ſhould be ſeen from experiment in this world, what chriſtianity is, when acted out, according to the true nature and ſpirit of it; and that this, and this only, can render men and ſociety happy in this ſtate. All this is therefore predicted, and promiſed. "Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee, and I will ſave her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out, and I will get them praiſe and fame in every land, where they have been put to ſhame: For I will make you a name and a praiſe among all people of the earth."*

One reaſon why this day of ſalvation is delayed ſo long after the death and reſurrection of Chriſt, doubtleſs is, that there may be proper and full opportunity to diſcover the depravity and wickedneſs of man, and the inſufficiency of all means that can be uſed, or methods taken, to bring men to repentance, and a cordial ſubmiſſion to Chriſt, unleſs accompanied by the ſpecial, omnipotent influences of the Holy Spirit, to renew their hearts: And clearly to manifeſt the natural enmity in the hearts of mankind againſt Chriſt, and the truths of the goſpel, and their ſtrong diſpoſition, and unconquerable by all poſſible external means and advantages, to oppoſe, and pervert the goſpel, and abuſe it to the worſt purpoſes; that it may appear in the moſt clear and ſtriking light, how greatly and wholly depraved, and utterly loſt, men are, unleſs they be ſaved by the waſhing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt; and that the whole praiſe and glory of the ſalvation of every one, may be aſcribed to the ſovereign grace of Chriſt, and man be forever abaſed. When God has ſufficiently tried men, and uſed a variety of the moſt proper and powerful means to bring the world to repentance, and all has proved in vain, he will then pour out his ſpirit upon all, and renew their hearts, and converts will ſpring up as graſs after ſhowers of rain; and the obſtinacy of man, and the power and ſovereign grace of Chriſt, will be acknowledged by all; and that men are ſaved, not by human might or power, but by the ſpirit of the Lord.†

And it appears proper and wiſe, that this day of proſperity and ſalvation, ſhould be in the latter end of the world, in the laſt times, as this is ſuited to excite and ſupport the faith and patience of chriſtians, who live in the preceding dark and evil times; and to encourage and animate them to faithfulneſs and conſtancy, in following Chriſt, and adherence to his cauſe, in the midſt of tempta-

* Zeph. iii. 19, 20. † Zech. iv. 6. Rom. xi. 32. 1 Cor. i, 21.

tions and trials; and this uſe is made of it in the ſcripture, eſpecially in the book of Revelation. And this is ſuited to excite the prayers of chriſtians in all the preceding ages of darkneſs, affliction and ſuffering, and the prevalence of ſin, and ſatan, for the coming and kingdom of Chriſt; which he has preſcribed as the firſt and moſt important petition in the pattern of prayer which he has given. "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. *Thy kingdom come.* Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." Daniel was excited and encouraged to faſt and pray for the deliverance of the people of God, from their affliction and diſtreſs in their captivity, by finding that this was foretold and promiſed by Jeremiah the Prophet.* And this has actually excited chriſtians to pray for this event, in all ages of the church; and doubtleſs they will be awakened and ſtirred up to pray more generally, conſtantly, and fervently for this important, glorious event, as the approach of it is found by prophecy to be nearer: And it will be introduced in anſwer to the prayers of thouſands and millions, who have been, and who will yet be, crying to God night and day; reſolving not to keep ſilence, or give him any reſt, till he eſtabliſh, and till he make Jeruſalem a praiſe in the earth.† For he will be enquired of for this by his church and people, to do it for them."‡

* Dan. ix. 2, 3, 4. † Iſai. lxii. 6, 7. ‡ Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

SECTION II.

In which it is conſidered, in what the Millennium will conſiſt, and what will be the peculiar happineſs and glory of that day, according to Scripture.

THERE have been, and ſtill are, very different opinions, reſpecting the Millennium, and the events which will take place in that day; which are grounded chiefly on the ſix firſt verſes in the twentieth chapter of the Revelation, which paſſage has been brought into view, in the preceding ſection; but is to be more particularly conſidered in this. Some

Some have ſuppoſed, that this paſſage is to be taken literally, as importing that at that time, Jeſus Chriſt will come in his human nature, from heaven to earth; and ſet his kingdom up here, and reign viſibly, and perſonally, and with diſtinguiſhed glory on earth. And that the bodies of the martyrs, and other eminent chriſtians, will then be raiſed from the dead, in which they ſhall live and reign with Chriſt here on earth, a thouſand years. And ſome ſuppoſe, that all the ſaints, the true friends to God and Chriſt, who have lived before that time, will then be raiſed from the dead, and live on earth perfectly holy, during this thouſand years. And this they ſuppoſe, is meant by the firſt reſurrection. Thoſe who agree in general in this notion of the Millennium, differ with reſpect to many circumſtances, which it is needleſs to mention here.

Others have underſtood this paragraph of ſcripture, in a figurative ſenſe. That by this reign of Chriſt on earth, is not meant his coming from heaven to earth, in his human, viſible nature; but his taking to himſelf his power, and utterly overthrowing the kingdom of ſatan, and ſetting up his own kingdom in all the world, which before this had been confined to very narrow bounds; and ſubduing all hearts to a willing ſubjection, and thus reigning over all men, who ſhall then be in the world, and live in that thouſand years. And by "The ſouls of them which were beheaded for the witneſs of Jeſus, and for the word of God, and which had not worſhipped the beaſt, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands," living again and reigning with Chriſt a thouſand years; they ſuppoſe, is not meant a literal reſurrection, or the reſurrection of their bodies, which is not aſſerted here, as there is nothing ſaid of their bodies, or of their being raiſed to life: But that they ſhall live again and reign with Chriſt, in the revival, proſperity, reign and triumph of that cauſe and intereſt in which they lived, and for the promotion of which they died; and in whoſe death, the cauſe ſeemed in a meaſure, and for a time, to die and be loſt. And they ſhall live again in their ſucceſſors, who ſhall ariſe and ſtand up with the ſame ſpirit, and in the ſame cauſe, in which they lived and died, and fill the world and reign with Chriſt a thouſand years, agreeable to ancient prophecies. "The meek ſhall inherit the earth. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatneſs of the kingdom under the whole heaven, ſhall be given to the people of the ſaints of the Moſt High; whoſe kingdom is an everlaſting kingdom,

and all dominions ſhall ſerve him." And they ſuppoſe, that this revival of the truths and cauſe of Chriſt, by the numerous inhabitants of the earth, riſing up to a new and holy life, and filling the world with holineſs and happineſs, is that which is here called the *firſt reſurrection*, in diſtinction from the ſecond, which will conſiſt in the reſurrection of the body; whereas this is a ſpiritual reſurrection; a reſurrection of the truths and cauſe of Chriſt, which had been in a great degree, dead and loſt; and a reſurrection of the ſouls of men, by the renovation of the Holy Ghoſt.

That this important paſſage of ſcripture, is to be underſtood in the figurative ſenſe, laſt mentioned, is very probable, if not certain. And the following conſiderations are thought ſufficient to ſupport it.

1. Moſt, if not all the prophecies in this book, are delivered in figurative language, referring to types and events recorded in the Old Teſtament; and in imitation of the language of the ancient Prophets. And this was proper and even neceſſary in the beſt manner to anſwer the ends of propheey, as might eaſily be ſhown, were it neceſſary. The firſt part of this paſſage, all muſt allow, is figurative. Satan cannot be bound with a literal, material chain. The key, the great chain, and the ſeal, cannot be underſtood literally. The whole is a figure, and can mean no more than that when the time of the Millennium arrives, or rather previous to it, Jeſus Chriſt will lay effectual reſtraints on ſatan, ſo that his powerful and prevailing influence by which he has before deceived and deſtroyed a great part of mankind, ſhall be wholly taken from him, for a thouſand years. And it is moſt natural to underſtand the other part of the deſcription of this remarkable event to be repreſented in the ſame figurative language; as the whole is a repreſentation of one ſcene; eſpecially, ſince no reaſon can be given why it ſhould not be underſtood ſo: And there are reaſons againſt taking it in a literal ſenſe, which will be mentioned in the following particulars.

2. To ſuppoſe that Chriſt ſhall come in his human nature to this earth, and live here in his whole perſon viſibly a thouſand years, before the day of judgment, appears to be contrary to ſeveral paſſages of ſcripture.

The coming of Chriſt, and his appearing at the day of judgment in his human nature, is ſaid to be his *ſecond* appearance, anſwering to his *firſt* appearance in his human nature on earth,

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from his birth to his aſcenſion into heaven, which was paſt. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Chriſt was once offered to bear the ſins of many; and unto them who look for him ſhall he appear the *ſecond time*, without ſin, unto ſalvation."* The appearance here ſpoken of, is the appearance of Chriſt at the day of judgment, to complete the ſalvation of his church. This could not be his appearing the ſecond time, were he thus to appear, and to be bodily preſent in his human nature on earth, in the time of the Millennium, which is to take place before the day of judgment. The coming of Chriſt, does not always intend his coming viſibly in his human nature; but he is ſaid to come, when he deſtroyed the temple and nation of the Jews, and appeared in favour of his church. So his deſtruction of heathen Rome, and delivering his church from that perſecuting power, was an inſtance of his coming. And he will, in the ſame way, come to deſtroy antichriſt, and the kingdom of ſatan in the world, and introduce the Millennium; and in theſe inſtances, and others, he may be ſaid to appear. But his coming to judgment, and appearing to complete the final deſtruction of all his enemies, and to perfect the ſalvation of his church, is his laſt coming and appearance. And though this will not be his ſecond appearance and coming, in the ſenſe now mentioned, and with reference to thoſe inſtances of his coming; yet, as he will then come and appear viſibly in his human nature; this will be his ſecond coming and appearance in this way and manner, having never appeared on earth in his human nature more than once before, or ſince his firſt aſcenſion to heaven, after his incarnation. Therefore, when the final judgment ſhall take place, Chriſt is repreſented as being revealed, and coming from heaven, and this is often called, by way of eminence, his *appearing*; meaning his appearing and coming from heaven in viſible ſplendor and glory, in his whole perſon, in both natures, divine and human. But if he were here on earth, viſible in his human nature, and reigning in his glorified body, during the Millennium; he would be already here to attend the laſt judgment, and he could not be properly ſaid to come from heaven, and to be revealed from heaven, becauſe this was done a thouſand years before. Therefore, that Chriſt ſhould come from heaven, and appear and reign in his human nature and preſence before the day of judgment, ſeems to be contrary to the following ſcriptures: "For the Lord himſelf ſhall

* Heb. ix. 27, 28.

ſhall *deſcend from heaven* with a ſhout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: And the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt. When the Lord Jeſus ſhall be *revealed from heaven*, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, &c. When he *ſhall come* to be glorified in his ſaints."* This is evidently his appearing the ſecond time, for the ſalvation of all them that look for him; and were he on earth before this, in the human nature, during the time of the Millennium, how could he be ſaid to be *revealed*, to *deſcend* and *come from* heaven to judge the world?

3. As it ſeems to be contrary to the above mentioned ſcriptures to ſuppoſe, that Chriſt will appear on earth, and reign a thouſand years in his human nature; ſo it appears contrary to all reaſon. Jeſus Chriſt is now on the throne of the univerſe, having all power in heaven and earth given to him as God-man, and Redeemer, being made head over all things to the church. He is in the moſt proper, agreeable, and convenient ſituation to govern the world, and take care of his church. It does not appear agreeable to his ſtation and office, as king and head over all things, for him to deſcend in the human nature, and erect a throne on earth; which, ſo far as can be conceived, would be no advantage to his perſon, deſign and work; but very much to the contrary. He is gone to heaven in the human nature, that he might reign there, till his enemies are made his footſtool, and all things ſhall be ſubdued under him. And his church on earth will enjoy him to as great a degree, and as much advantage, as if he were perſonally on earth in the human nature, and more; and will have as great enjoyment of his preſence. He is now in the beſt ſituation to be adored and worſhipped by his church on earth. Though they now do not ſee him, yet believing and loving him, they rejoice with joy unſpeakable and full of glory. And it would not tend to increaſe this faith, love and joy, to have him come from heaven, and live in ſome place on earth, in his human nature; but the contrary: For but few, compared with the whole inhabitants of the world, could have acceſs to him, or ſee him more than they now do. And when the human nature is in heaven, all may equally have acceſs to him, love and worſhip him. His church and kingdom on earth will be as happy, ſplendid and glorious, as if he were on earth, as he is now in heaven, and much more ſo; for theſe will conſiſt in his ſpiritual preſence and influence, which may

* 1 Theſſ. iv. 16. 2 Theſſ. i. 7, 8, 10.

may be as great while his human nature is in heaven, as if it were on earth; and in their holy conformity to Chriſt, which would not be increaſed by his being in that ſenſe on earth. It hence appears in no reſpect advantageous or deſirable, but the contrary, that Jeſus Chriſt ſhould come perſonally in the human nature from heaven to earth, to reign here with his church, or that he ſhould thus appear, till he ſhall come to judgment. It is therefore unreaſonable to expect or ſuppoſe he will thus come, unleſs it were expreſsly aſſerted in ſcripture, which it certainly is not; but there are ſome, if not many paſſages, which ſeem to be inconſiſtent with it.

It may be proper to obſerve here, that the queſtion reſpecting the manner in which Chriſt will reign on earth in the Millennium, has no concern with the queſtion concerning the literal or figurative meaning of this paſſage, as the former does not depend upon the latter: For no man will ſuppoſe, that Chriſt's reigning on earth, is to be underſtood in a figurative ſenſe. If he ſhall reign on earth in the hearts of men, by their voluntary ſubjection to him, he will reign as literally, as if he were preſent on earth in his humanity. The queſtion, whether this paſſage is to be underſtood literally or figuratively, reſpects the ſouls of them that were beheaded for the witneſs of Jeſus, &c. their living and reigning with Chriſt a thouſand years. This therefore leads to other obſervations.

4. The Apoſtle Paul in his writings, does not appear to expect to have his body raiſed from the dead to live here on earth again, after he died; or ſay any thing to lead the chriſtians of this day to expect any ſuch thing, but the contrary.

He ſays, "It is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment." And leads chriſtians to look forward to the ſecond coming of Chriſt, when he will come to judgment, as the next great event that will immediately reſpect them; which ſeems to be inconſiſtent with the ſaints having their bodies raiſed, and living in this world again, a thouſand years before the day of judgment. He addreſſes chriſtians in the following words, "If ye then be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things which are above, where Chriſt ſitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Chriſt in God. When Chriſt, who is

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our life, ſhall appear, then ſhall ye alſo appear with him in glory."* He directs them to expect and ſeek enjoyment in heaven where Chriſt is; and not to expect that he will leave his throne there, till he ſhall appear the ſecond time, to receive his ſaints to glory in heaven. For appearing with Chriſt in glory, means, appearing with him in heaven, as that is the place of glory, where the redeemed are brought to be glorified, to be where Chriſt is, to behold his glory. The Apoſtle Peter, ſpeaking of the diſſolution of the heavens and earth, ſays, "Nevertheleſs we, according to his promiſe, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs."† Some have ſuppoſed, that this is the Millennium ſtate, which ſhall take place after the general conflagration, by which the earth will be renewed; in which a perfectly holy and happy ſtate ſhall commence, to which all the ſaints who had died ſhall be raiſed, &c. But ſuch a notion cannot be reconciled to other paſſages of ſcripture, in which, as has been obſerved, the Millennium is repreſented as taking place before the general conflagration and the day of judgment. And after theſe are over, and the wicked are caſt into endleſs puniſhment,‡ the Apoſtle John ſays, "And I ſay a new heaven and a new earth: For the firſt heaven and the firſt earth were paſſed away; and there was no more ſea."§ By which the heavenly ſtate is chiefly if not wholly meant, where redemption and the church will be perfected. By the new heaven and new earth, is meant the work of redemption, or the church redeemed by Chriſt. This is the new creation, infinitely ſuperiour to the old creation, the natural world, and more important, excellent and durable; of which the latter is a faint type or ſhadow.

The renovation of the hearts of men, by the Spirit of God, by which they become true chriſtians, is in ſcripture called a new creature, or as the original words καινὴ κτίσις may as well be rendered, *a new creation.* "Therefore, if any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature: Old things are paſt away, behold, all things are become new."‖ "For in Chriſt Jeſus, neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but a new creature."¶ Therefore, every true member of the church belongs to the new creation, and is part of it; and this new creation of the new heaven and new earth, goes on and makes advances, as the church is enlarged

* Col. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4. † 2 Pet. iii. 13. ‡ Rev. 20.
§ Chap. xxi. 1. ‖ 2 Cor. v. 17. ¶ Gal. vi. 15.

larged and rises to a state of greater prosperity, and proceeds towards perfection.

The new heavens, and new earth, the redeemed church of Christ, will be brought to a very happy and glorious state in the Millennium, and greater advantages will be made then in this new creation, than were ever made before. Therefore, to this event, the following prophecy of Isaiah, does chiefly refer, if not wholly. "For behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth. And the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be you glad and rejoice forever, in that which I create: For behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy."* It appears from the preceding and following context, that this prophecy refers to the Millennium, in which the new creation, the church of Christ, will come to the most perfect and happy state to which it will be brought in this world; from which it will pass to a perfect state, and be completely finished, after the general resurrection and judgment. Then the old creation, the heavens and the earth shall pass away, and be burnt up, and the new creation shall be finished, and brought to a most perfect, beautiful, happy and glorious state. To the new heaven and new earth, thus completed, wherein that righteousness or true holiness, which is the beauty, happiness and glory of the new creation, will *dwell*, i. e. continue and flourish forever, the Apostles Peter and John have chief reference in their words, which have been transcribed above.

5. It does not appear desirable, or to be any advantage to the departed saints, or to the church of Christ on earth, to have the bodies of all who have died before the Millennium, raised from their graves, and come to live a thousand years in this world, before the general resurrection. They are now perfectly holy and happy; and so far as can be conceived, it would be no addition, but a diminution to their happiness, to come and live in this world, in the body, to eat and drink, and partake of the enjoyments of the world. This would be a degradation, which on no account can be desirable to the spirits of the just, now made perfect in heaven. And it would be no advance in the work of redemption, which is then to be carried on in a greater degree, than ever before. Nor would this be any advantage to the church, in that happy state, to which it will then be brought; but the contrary, as they would take up that room in the world, which will be then wanted

* Chap. lxv. 17, 18.

for thoſe who will be born in that day. And the ſpirits of the juſt could not know or enjoy ſo much of the proſperity and happineſs of the church, in the ſalvation of men, were they to live in bodies on earth, in that time. The inhabitants of heaven have a more particular and extenſive knowledge, of what takes place in favour of the church on earth, than any in this world have, or than they could have, were they to come and live here. They know of every converſion that takes place in this world; and they muſt have the knowledge of the ſtate of the church on earth, and of every event which comes to paſs in favour of it, and ſee the whole of its proſperity. And they have great joy in every thing of this kind. "There is joy in heaven, in preſence of the angels of God, over one ſinner that repenteth." How greatly will the happineſs and joy in heaven be increaſed, when all the inhabitants of the world ſhall be converted to Chriſt, and the church of Chriſt ſhall fill the earth, and appear in the beauty of holineſs! Agreeable to this, the inhabitants of heaven are repreſented as greatly rejoicing in the proſperity of the church on earth, and the overthrow of all her enemies. "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy Apoſtles and Prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, ſaying, Hallelujah; ſalvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God; for he hath judged the great whore, &c. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herſelf ready."*— Surely none will deſire to leave that place of knowledge, light and joy, and come and be confined in the body in this world, which will be darkneſs and ſolitary, compared with that: Such a change of place could be no privilege or reward; but rather a calamity. Therefore, it is not to be believed, unleſs it be plainly, and in expreſs words revealed; which, it is preſumed, it is not. This leads to another obſervation.

6. There is nothing expreſsly ſaid of the reſurrection of the body in this paſſage. The Apoſtle John ſaw the *ſouls* of them which were beheaded for the witneſs of Jeſus, &c. and they lived and reigned with Chriſt. The reſurrection of the body, is no where expreſſed in ſcripture, by the ſoul's living. And as there is nothing ſaid of the body, and he only ſaw their ſouls to live, this does not appear to be a proper expreſſion, to denote the reſurrection of the body, and their living in that. This therefore does not ſeem to

* Rev. xviii. 20. xix. 1—7.

to be the natural meaning of the words; and certainly is not the *neceſſary* meaning. We are therefore warranted to look for another meaning, and to acquieſce in it, if one can be found, which is more eaſy and natural, and more agreeable to the whole paſſage, and to the ſcripture in general. Therefore,

7. The moſt eaſy and probable meaning is, that the ſouls of the martyrs, and all the faithful followers of Chriſt, who have lived in the world, and have died before the Millennium ſhall commence, ſhall revive and live again, in their ſucceſſors, who ſhall riſe up in the ſame ſpirit, and in the ſame character, in which they lived and died; and in the revival and flouriſhing of that cauſe which they eſpouſed, and ſpent their lives in promoting it, which cauſe ſhall appear to be almoſt loſt and dead, previous to the introduction of that glorious day. This is therefore a ſpiritual reſurrection, by which all the inhabitants of the world will be made ſpiritually alive, where ſpiritual death before had reigned; and they ſhall appear in the ſpirit and power of thoſe martyrs and holy men, who had before lived in the world, and who ſhall live again, in theſe their ſucceſſors, and in the revival of their cauſe, and in the reſurrection of the church, from the very low ſtate, in which it had been before the Millennium, to a ſtate of great proſperity and glory.

This is agreeable to the way of repreſenting things in ſcripture, in other inſtances. John the baptiſt was Elijah, becauſe he roſe in the ſpirit of Elijah, and promoted the ſame cauſe in which Elijah lived and died; and Elijah revived and lived in John the baptiſt, becauſe he went before Chriſt, in the ſpirit and power of Elijah.* Therefore Chriſt ſays of John, "This is Elijah who was to come."†

It is alſo to be obſerved, that the revival and reſtoration of the church to a ſtate of proſperity, from a dark, low ſtate, is repreſented by a reſurrection to life, or as life from the dead. "Thy dead men ſhall live, together with my dead body ſhall they ariſe; awake and ſing, ye that dwell in the duſt; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth ſhall caſt out the dead."‡ In the thirty ſeventh chapter of Ezekiel, this is repreſented by bringing dry bones to life; and from them, raiſing up a very great army.—This is a metaphorical or figurative reſurrection. "Then he ſaid unto me, ſon of man, theſe bones are the whole houſe of Iſrael:

* Luke i. 17. † Matth. xi. 14. ‡ Iſai. xxvi. 19.

Behold, they ſay our bones are dried, and our hope is loſt; we are cut off for our parts. Therefore, phephecy and ſay unto them, Thus ſaith the Lord God, Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cauſe you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Iſrael." The Apoſtle Paul, ſpeaking of the converſion of the Jews to Chriſt, at the Millennium, ſays it ſhall be as "life from the dead."*

In the Millennium, there will be a ſpiritual reſurrection, a reſurrection of the ſouls of the whole church on earth, and in heaven. All nations will be converted, and the world will be filled with ſpiritual life, as it never was before; and this will be a general reſurrection of the ſouls of men. This was repreſented in the returning prodigal. The father ſays, "This my ſon was dead, and is alive." And the Apoſtle Paul ſpeaks of chriſtians as raiſed from the dead to life. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in ſins, hath quickened us together with Chriſt."† "If ye then be *riſen* with Chriſt."‡ And this will be a moſt remarkable reſurrection of the church on earth from a low, dark, afflicted ſtate, to a ſtate of great life and joy. It will be multiplied to an exceeding great army, which will cover the face of the earth. And heaven will in a ſenſe and degree, come down to earth; the ſpirit of the martyrs, and of all the juſt made perfect, will now revive and appear on earth, in their numerous ſucceſſors, and the joy of thoſe in heaven will be greatly increaſed.

This is the firſt reſurrection, in which all they who have a part are bleſſed and holy. "Bleſſed and holy is he who hath part in the firſt reſurrection: On ſuch the ſecond death hath no power." It is implied that *they only* are bleſſed and holy, who ſhare in this reſurrection; and therefore that all the redeemed in heaven and earth, who are bleſſed and holy, are the ſubjects of it, or have part in it. All who have been or ſhall be raiſed from death to ſpiritual life, have by this, a part in this firſt reſurrection; and they, and they only, ſhall eſcape the ſecond death. This is a farther evidence that this firſt reſurrection is a ſpiritual reſurrection, a reſurrection of the ſoul; for if it were a literal reſurrection of the body, no one would think it would include all the happy and holy, all that ſhall be ſaved. The ſecond reſurrection is to be the reſurrection of the body, in which all ſhall have part, both the holy and

* Rom. xi, 15. † Eph. ii. 4, 5. ‡ Col. iii. 1.

and the unholy, the bleſſed and the miſerable; which is to take place after the firſt reſurrection is over, and the Millennium is ended, and after the riſe and deſtruction of Gog and Magog; when the day of judgment ſhall come on, of which there is an account in the latter part of this chapter. "And I ſaw the dead, ſmall and great, ſtand before God. And the ſea gave up the dead which were in it: And death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: And they were judged every man according to their works." "But the reſt of the dead lived not again until the thouſand years were finiſhed." The *reſt of the dead*, are all the dead which have no part in the firſt reſurrection; that is, are not holy, and partakers of ſpiritual life. This includes all the wicked who ſhall have lived, and ſhall die before the Millennium, the laſt of which will be ſlain, and ſwept off the earth previous to the Millennium, and in order to introduce it, of which there is a repreſentation in the words immediately preceding the paſſage under conſideration. "And *the reſt* were ſlain with the ſword of him that ſat upon the horſe, which ſword proceeded out of his mouth, and all the fowls were filled with their fleſh." In our tranſlation, it is *the remnant*. It is the ſame word in the original, Οι λοιποι, which is tranſlated *the reſt*, in the words tranſcribed above; and the latter ſeem to have reference to the former. The reſt of the dead, are the wicked dead, in oppoſition to the righteous, who lived again in their ſucceſſors, who take poſſeſſion of the earth and reign; and in the revival and proſperity of their cauſe, and the kingdom of which they are members. During this thouſand years, the reſt of the dead, all the antichriſtian party, and the wicked enemies of Chriſt, who lived and died in the cauſe of ſatan, do not live again: They will have no ſucceſſors on earth, who ſhall riſe in their ſpirit, and eſpouſe and promote their cauſe; but this will be wholly run down and loſt, till the thouſand years ſhall be ended: And then they ſhall live again a ſhort time in their ſucceſſors, Gog and Magog, who ſhall ariſe in their ſpirit and cauſe, and increaſe and prevail, while ſatan is looſed again for a little ſeaſon. This is implied in the words, "But the reſt of the dead lived not again, until the thouſand years were finiſhed." It is ſuppoſed that they will live again then, which muſt be during the time in which ſatan ſhall be looſed; for the general reſurrection of the bodies will not be till this is ended. Theſe dead will live then,

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juſt as the ſouls of the martyrs, and all the faithful followers of Chriſt, who had died, will live in the Millennium.*

That this prophecy reſpects all nations, and the whole of mankind who ſhall live in the world in that thouſand years, is evident, in that the binding of ſatan reſpects them all. "That he ſhould deceive the nations no more, till the thouſand years ſhould be fulfilled." And this anſwers to a prophecy in Iſaiah. "And he will deſtroy in this mountain, the face of the covering caſt over *all people*, and the vail that is ſpread over *all nations*."† All nations, the world of mankind therefore, who ſhall then live on the earth, will have part in the firſt reſurrection. And this warrants the application of all the prophecies which have been mentioned in the preceding ſection, and others of the ſame tenor, to this time. And there is good reaſon to believe, that this prophecy, in the firſt ſix verſes of the twentieth chapter of the Revelation, is expreſſed in language beſt ſuited to anſwer the end of it, if it be underſtood as it has been now explained. The meaning is as obvious and plain, as is deſirable and proper that of prophecy ſhould be, when compared with other prophecies. And it is in the beſt manner ſuited to ſupport and comfort the followers of Chriſt, who live before that time; and to animate them to faithfulneſs, conſtancy and patience, under all their ſufferings in this cauſe, while the wicked proſper and triumph, and ſatan reigns in the world, which is one ſpecial end of this revelation. Here they are taught, that an end is to come to the afflictions of the church, and to the triumph of all her enemies. That ſatan's kingdom on earth ſhall come to an end, and the church ſhall riſe and ſpread, and fill the world; that the cauſe in which they labour and ſuffer ſhall be virtuous, and that all who ſuffer in this cauſe, and who are faithful to Chriſt, ſhall live to ſee this happy, glorious day, and have a large ſhare in it, in proportion to the degree and length of their ſufferings,

* "It is very agreeable to the deſign and connection of this prophecy, to underſtand the reſt of the dead, who lived not again till the thouſand years were finiſhed, of the reſt or remnant, viz. of thoſe who were ſlain with the ſword of him that ſat on the horſe. Thus the dead church raiſed to life, and living and reigning for a thouſand years, and the enemies of the church remaining dead, and not living again till the thouſand years were finiſhed, will exactly agree in the ſame figurative meaning. This will be a ſenſe conſiſtent with the reſurrection of the antichriſtian party again, for a little ſeaſon, after the thouſand years ſhall be finiſhed." Mr. Lowman's Note on Rev. xx. 5.

† Iſaiah xxv. 7.

ings, labours, and perſevering patience and fidelity, in the cauſe of Chriſt and his church.

THE way is now prepared, to conſider and ſhow more particularly, in what the happineſs and glory of the Millennium will conſiſt; and what particular circumſtances will attend the church at that day: What is revealed concerning this by expreſs prophecies, and what is implied in them, or may be deduced as conſequences from what is expreſsly declared. It will be no wonder if ſome miſtakes ſhould be made on this point; but it is hoped if there ſhould be any, they will not be very hurtful: And it is apprehended that the greateſt error will be in falling ſhort, and not coming up to the reality, in the deſcription of the happineſs and glory of that day; for doubtleſs, our ideas of theſe, when raiſed to the higheſt of which we are at preſent capable, fall vaſtly ſhort of the truth. There is good reaſon to conclude, however, that the church, and chriſtians, will not be perfectly holy in that day; but that every one will be attended with a degree of ſinful imperfection, while in the body, however great may be his attainments and advantages in knowledge and holineſs. Doubtleſs the inſpired declarations, that "There is no man which ſinneth not—There is not a juſt man upon earth, that doeth good and ſinneth not—That if any who profeſſes to be a chriſtian, ſay he hath no ſin, he deceiveth himſelf, and the truth is not in him," will remain true to the end of the world, even in the Millennium; and there will be no perfection on this ſide heaven. The apoſtacy which will take place at the end of the Millennium, can be better accounted for, on the ſuppoſition that the ſaints will not be perfect in that time, and ſeems to ſuppoſe it. Though they may, and doubtleſs will, have vaſtly higher degrees of light and holineſs, than any ſhall have before that time; yet they will be far from being wholly without ſin.

It is moſt probable, that every individual perſon who ſhall then live will be a real chriſtian; and all will doubtleſs be members of the church, in that day. That is the time when "all ſhall know the Lord, from the leaſt to the greateſt." God ſays to his church, ſpeaking of that day, "Thy people alſo ſhall be all righteous."* "Awake, awake, put on thy ſtrength, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jeruſalem, the holy city: For henceforth there ſhall no more come unto thee the uncircumciſed and the unclean."†

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* Iſai. lx. 21. † Iſai. lii. 1.

The following things will take place in the Millennium in an eminent degree, as they never did before; which may be mentioned as generals, including many particulars, ſome of which will be afterwards ſuggeſted.

I. THAT will be a time of eminent holineſs, when it ſhall be acted out by all, in a high degree, in all the branches of it, ſo as to appear in its true beauty, and the happy effects of it. This will be the peculiar glory, and the ſource of the happineſs of the Millennium. The Prophet Zechariah, ſpeaking of that day, ſays, "In that day, ſhall there be upon the bells of the horſes, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots of the Lord's houſe ſhall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jeruſalem and in Judah, ſhall be holineſs unto the Lord of hoſts."*— In theſe metaphorical expreſſions, is declared the eminent degree of holineſs of that day, which will conſecrate every thing, even all the utenſils and the common buſineſs and enjoyments of life, unto the Lord.

Holineſs conſiſts in love to God, and to man, with every affection and exerciſe implied in this, which being expreſſed and acted out, appears in the exerciſe of piety towards God, in every branch of it; and of righteouſneſs and goodneſs, or diſintereſted benevolence towards man, including ourſelves. This, ſo far as it ſhall take place, will baniſh all the evils which have exiſted and prevailed in the world; and becoming univerſal, and riſing to a high and eminent degree, will introduce a ſtate of enjoyment and happineſs, which never was known before on earth; and render it a reſemblance of heaven in a high degree.

This will be effected by the abundant influences of the Holy Spirit, poured down on men more univerſally, and in more conſtant and plentiful effuſions, than ever before; for all holineſs in man, is the effect of the Holy Spirit. That day will be, in a peculiar ſenſe, *the diſpenſation of the Holy Spirit*, when he will appear as the author of all holineſs, by whoſe influence alone divine revealed truth, and all religious inſtitutions and means, become efficacious and ſalutary; by which he will have peculiar honour, in the holineſs and ſalvation which ſhall then take place. The prophecies of ſcripture which reſpect the Millennium, repreſent it in this light. God, ſpeaking by Iſaiah of that time, ſays, "I will pour water upon him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my ſpirit upon thy ſeed, and my bleſſing upon thine offspring.

* Chap. xiv. 20, 21.

offspring. And they ſhall ſpring up as among the graſs, as willows by the water courſes." And the ſame time and event is mentioned as the effect of the Holy Spirit, poured out upon the church. "Neither will I hide my face any more from them: *For I have poured out my Spirit upon the houſe of Iſrael*, ſaith the Lord God."* The ſame event is predicted by the Prophet Joel. "And it ſhall come to paſs afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all fleſh. And alſo upon the ſervants, and upon the handmaids in theſe days, will I pour out my Spirit."† The Apoſtle Peter, applies this paſſage in Joel, to the pouring out of the Spirit, on the Apoſtles and others on the day of Penticoſt.‡ But this prophecy was fulfilled only in a ſmall degree then. This was but the beginning, the firſt fruits, which will iſſue in that which is unſpeakably greater, more extenſive and glorious in the days of the Millennium, to which this prediction has chief reſpect, and when it will have the full and moſt complete accompliſhment.

II. THERE will be a great increaſe of light and knowledge to a degree vaſtly beyond what has been before. This is indeed implied in the great degree of holineſs, which has been mentioned. For knowledge, mental light, and holineſs, are inſeparably connected; and are, in ſome reſpects, the ſame. Holineſs is true light and diſcerning, ſo far as it depends upon a right taſte, and conſiſts in it; and it is a thirſt after every kind and degree of uſeful knowledge; and this deſire and thirſt for knowledge, will be great and ſtrong, in proportion to the degree of holineſs exerciſed: And forms the mind to conſtant attention, and to make ſwift advances in underſtanding and knowledge; and becomes a ſtrong guard againſt miſtakes, error and deluſion. Therefore, a time of eminent holineſs, muſt be a time of proportionably great light and knowledge. This is the repreſentation which the ſcripture gives of that time. The end of binding ſatan, and caſting him into the bottomleſs pit, is ſaid to be, "That he ſhould deceive the nations no more, till the thouſand years ſhould be fulfilled." This will put an end to the darkneſs, and multiplicity of ſtrong deluſions, which do prevail, and will prevail, till that time, by which ſatan ſupports and promotes his intereſt and kingdom among men.—Then "The face of the covering caſt over all people, and the vail ſpread over all nations, ſhall be taken away and deſtroyed:"§

* Ezek. xxxix. 29. † Joel ii. 28, 29.
‡ Acts ii. 16, &c. § Iſai. xxv. 7.

"And the eyes of them that ſee, ſhall not be dim; and the ears of them that hear, ſhall hearken. The heart alſo of the raſh, ſhall underſtand knowledge, and the tongue of the ſtammerers ſhall be ready to ſpeak plainly."* The ſuperior light and knowledge of that day, is metaphorically repreſented in the following words: "Moreover, the light of the moon ſhall be as the light of the ſun, and the light of the ſun ſhall be ſeven fold, as the light of ſeven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the ſtroke of their wound."† In that day, "The earth ſhall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the ſea."‡

The holy ſcriptures will then be attended to by all, and ſtudied with care, meekneſs, humility and uprightneſs of heart, earneſtly deſiring to underſtand them, and know the truth; and the truths they contain will be received with a high reliſh and delight: And the Bible will be much better underſtood, than ever before. Many things expreſſed or implied in the ſcripture, which are now overlooked and diſregarded, will then be diſcovered, and appear important and excellent; and thoſe things which now appear intricate and unintelligible, will then appear plain and eaſy. Then public teachers will be eminently burning and ſhining lights; apt to teach; ſcribes well inſtructed into the things of the kingdom of heaven, who will bring out of their treaſures, things new and old: And the hearers will be all attention, and receive the truth in the love of it, into honeſt and good hearts; and light and knowledge will conſtantly increaſe. The converſation of friends and neighbours, when they meet, will be full of inſtruction, and they will aſſiſt each other in their inquiries after the truth, and in purſuit of knowledge. Parents will be able and diſpoſed to inſtruct their children, as ſoon as they are capable of learning; and they will early underſtand what are the great and leading truths which are revealed in the Bible, and the duties and inſtitutions there preſcribed. And from their childhood they will know and underſtand the holy ſcriptures, by which they will grow in underſtanding and wiſdom; and will ſoon know more than the greateſt and beſt divines have known in ages before. And a happy foundation will be laid for great advances in knowledge and uſefulneſs to the end of life. Agreeable to this, the ſcripture, ſpeaking of that day, ſays, "There ſhall be no more thence (i. e. in the church) an infant

* Iſai. xxxii. 3, 4. † Iſai. xxx. 26. ‡ Iſai. xi. 9.

fant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child ſhall die an hundred years old."* "An infant of days," is an *old infant*. That is, an old man who is an infant in knowledge, underſtanding and diſcretion. Many ſuch aged infants have been, and ſtill are to be found. In that day all ſhall make advances in true knowledge, diſcretion and wiſdom, in ſome proportion to their years. "Nor an old man that hath not filled his days." That is, an old man who has not improved in knowledge and uſefulneſs and every good attainment, according to his age. "For a child ſhall die an hundred years old." That is, children in years ſhall then make ſuch early progreſs in knowledge, and in religion, and in all excellent and uſeful attainments, that they ſhall equal, if not ſurpaſs, the higheſt attainments in theſe things, of the oldeſt men who have lived in former ages.

They will then have every deſirable advantage and opportunity to get knowledge. They will all be engaged in the ſame purſuit, and give all the aid and aſſiſtance to each other, in their power.—They will all have ſufficient leiſure to purſue and acquire learning of every kind, that will be beneficial to themſelves and to ſociety; eſpecially knowledge of divinity. And great advances will be made in all arts and ſciences, and in every uſeful branch of knowledge, which tends to promote the ſpiritual and eternal good of men, or their convenience and comfort in this life.

III. It will be a time of univerſal peace, love and general and cordial friendſhip. War and all ſtrife and contention ſhall then ceaſe, and be ſucceeded by mutual love, friendſhip and benificence. Thoſe luſts of men, which originate in ſelf love, or ſelfiſhneſs, which produce all the wars and ſtrifes among men, ſhall be ſubdued and mortified, and yield to that diſintereſted benevolence, that heavenly wiſdom, which is peaceable, gentle and eaſy to be intreated. This will effectually put an end to war, as the ſcripture teaches. "And he ſhall judge among the nations, and ſhall rebuke many people: And they ſhall beat their ſwords into plowſhares, and their ſpears into pruning hooks: Nation ſhall not lift up ſword againſt nation, neither ſhall they learn war any more. And my people ſhall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in ſure dwellings, and in quiet reſting places."† The whole world of mankind will be united as one family, wiſely ſeeking the good of

* Iſai. lxv. 20. † Iſai. ii. 4. xxxii. 18.

each other, in the exercise of the most sweet love and friendship, founded upon the best and everlasting principles. "The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." This change, which shall then take place, in which men, who were in ages before, like savage beasts, injurious, cruel, revengeful and destructive to each other, shall lay aside all this, and become harmless, humble and benevolent, is set in a striking, beautiful light in prophecies, representing it by the most fierce and cruel beasts of prey, changing their nature, and living quietly with those creatures which they used to destroy; and so tame and pliable that a little child might lead them; and by the most venemous creatures and insects becoming harmless, so that a child might play with them without any danger of being hurt. Isaiah, speaking of that day, says, "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: And the lion shall eat straw, like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den."* Then "They shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid."†

IV. IN that day, men will not only be united in peace and love, as brethren; but will agree in sentiments, respecting the doctrines and truth contained in the Bible, and the religious institutions and practice, which are there prescribed.

Professing christians have been from the beginning of christianity to this day, greatly divided, and have opposed each other in their religious sentiments and practices; and are now divided into various parties, sects and denominations, while all appeal to divine revelation, and profess to take their sentiments and practices from that.

It has been often said by some professing christians, and is a sentiment which appears to be spreading at this day, That difference in religious sentiments, and in attendance on the institutions of the gospel, and modes of worship, is attended with no inconvenience, but is rather desirable, and advantageous; and by this variety, christianity is rendered more agreeable and beautiful.

That

* Isai. xi. 6, 7, 8. † Mic. iv. 4.

That it is impoſſible that all men, whoſe capacities and genius are ſo different and various, and their minds, and way of thinking and conception are naturally ſo far from being alike, ſhould ever be brought to think alike, and embrace the ſame religious ſentiments. That this difference in man's belief and ſentiment cannot be criminal; for men are no more obliged to think alike, than they are to look alike, and have the ſame bodily features and ſtature. All the union that is required, or that can take place, is that of kind affection, love and charity.

But ſuch ſentiments as theſe are not agreeable to reaſon or ſcripture. Error in judgment and ſentiment, eſpecially in things of a moral nature, is always wrong; and does not conſiſt or originate merely in any defect of the moral faculties of the mind; but is of a moral nature, in which the taſte, affection, or inclination of the heart is concerned; and therefore is always, in every degree of it, morally wrong, and more or leſs criminal. Were the moral faculties of the mind, were the heart, perfectly right, man would not be capable of error, or of judging wrong, or making any miſtake, eſpecially in things of religion. The natural faculties of the mind, of perception and underſtanding or reaſon, conſidered as ſeparate from the inclination or will, do not lead, and have no tendency in themſelves, to judge wrong, or contrary to the truth of things. To do ſo, is to judge without evidence, and contrary to it, which the mind never would or could do, were not the inclination or heart concerned in it, ſo as to have influence, which muſt be a wrong inclination, and contrary to the truth, and to evidence; and therefore is morally wrong, or criminal.

Therefore, all the miſtakes and wrong opinions which men entertain, reſpecting the doctrines, inſtitutions and duties revealed in the Bible, are criminal, and of a bad tendency. They muſt be ſo, as they are contrary to man's obligation and duty to believe all revealed truth; and are wholly owing to a wrong bias or inclination, or the depravity and corruption of the heart. What God has revealed in his word, he has declared to man, to be received by him, and believed to be the truth; of which he has given ſufficient evidence. And the man who does not believe what God has clearly revealed, and of which he has given ſufficient evidence, even all that can be reaſonably deſired, does abuſe and pervert his own underſtanding, and ſhuts his eyes againſt the truth, and refuſes to receive the teſtimony which God has given. And who will ſay there is no crime in this!

Since

Since therefore, all miſtakes and errors, contrary to the truths made known in the Bible, are criminal, and owing to the corruption of the heart of man, then perfect holineſs will exclude all error, and there neither is, nor can be, any wrong judgment in heaven; and in the Millennium, which will be a greater image of heaven than ever was before on earth, holineſs, light and knowledge, will riſe ſo high, that the former errors in principle and practice will ſubſide, and there will be a great and general union in the belief and practice of the truth, contained in divine revelation.

As there is but "one Lord, one faith, and one baptiſm," ſo in that day men will be united in the belief and profeſſion of this one faith, in the ſyſtem of doctrines revealed in the Bible, which then will appear plain, and with the cleareſt evidence to all. And they will have one common Lord, will underſtand, and obey all the commands of Chriſt; and they will know what are the inſtitutions and ordinances which Chriſt has appointed, which are all implied in baptiſm: They will underſtand what is the import of this, and implied in it, and be united in ſentiments and practice, ſo as to form a beautiful, happy union and harmony; which will put an end to the variety and oppoſition of opinions, and practices, which now divide profeſſing chriſtians into ſo many ſects, parties and denominations. The whole church, with all the members of it, which will fill the earth, and include all mankind then living, will in that day, come to that to which the goſpel tends, and is deſigned to bring it: It will "Come in *the unity of the faith*, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt: That they ſhall be no more children, toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the ſleight of men, and the cunning craftineſs, whereby they lie in wait to deceive: But ſpeaking the truth in love, ſhall grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Chriſt."* Then, agreeable to the wiſh and injunction of the Apoſtle Paul, chriſtians will "all ſpeak the ſame thing, and there will be no diviſions among them; but will be perfectly joined together in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgment."† Then the inventions and preſcriptions of men, both in doctrines and modes of worſhip, and in chriſtian practice, will be aboliſhed and ceaſe. The Bible will be then underſtood, and be found a ſufficient

* Eph. iv. 13, 14, 15. † 1 Cor. i. 10.

ſufficient and perfect rule of faith and practice, in which all will agree, and will join "with one mind, and one mouth, to worſhip and glorify God."* Then the weapons of the goſpel, the truths of divine revelation, being preached, underſtood and received, will caſt down the imaginations of men, and every high thing, introduced by the pride of man, which now exalts itſelf againſt the knowledge of God; and will bring into captivity every thought, to the obedience of Chriſt."† "And the Lord ſhall be king over all the earth. In that day ſhall there be one Lord, and his name one."‡ All ſhall agree in their view and acknowledgment of the divine character, and conſequently in all the revealed truths and dictates contained in the Bible. Chriſt will then come to his temple, his church, "and he will be like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's ſoap. And he ſhall ſit as a refiner and purifier of ſilver; and he ſhall purify the ſons of Levi, and purge them as gold and ſilver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteouſneſs."§ The queſtion will be aſked now, as it was then, "But who may abide the day of his coming? And who ſhall ſtand when he appeareth?" What ſect or denomination of chriſtians will abide the trial of that day, and be eſtabliſhed?

Anſwer.—Nothing but the truth, or that which is conformable to it, will abide the trial of that day. "The lip of truth ſhall be eſtabliſhed forever."‖ "The righteous nation which *keepeth the truth* ſhall enter in," and be eſtabliſhed in that day.¶ Thoſe of every denomination will doubtleſs expect, that the doctrines they hold, and their mode of worſhip and diſcipline, and practice, with reſpect to the inſtitutions and ordinances of Chriſt, will be then eſtabliſhed as agreeable to the truth; and all others will be given up; and all men will freely conform to them. But the moſt, and perhaps all, will be much diſappointed in this expectation; eſpecially with regard to the different modes of worſhip, and practiſes relating to diſcipline, and the ordinances of the goſpel. When the church comes to be built up in that day, and put on her beautiful garments, it will doubtleſs be different from any thing which now takes place; and what church and particular denomination is now neareſt the truth, and the church which will exiſt at that time, muſt be left to be decided by the event. It is certain, that all doctrines and practices which are not agreeable to the truth, will

* Rom. xv. 6. † 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. ‡ Zech. xiv. 9.
§ Mal. iii. 1, 2, 3. ‖ Prov. xii. 19. ¶ Iſai. xxvi. 2.

will at that day, as wood, hay, and ſtubble, be burnt up. Therefore, it now highly concerns all, honeſtly to ſeek and find, love and practiſe, truth and peace.

It is agreeable to human nature, and ſeems to be eſſential to rational creatures, to be moſt pleaſed with thoſe who think as they do, and are of the ſame ſentiments with themſelves, in thoſe things in which they feel themſelves chiefly intereſted and concerned. And this agreement in ſentiment, cements and increaſes their union and friendſhip. But this is true, in a peculiar ſenſe and degree, in the caſe before us. There can be no proper, cordial, religious union among profeſſing chriſtians, who wholly differ and oppoſe each other in their opinion, reſpecting the truths and doctrines of the goſpel. And agreement in ſentiment, and in the knowledge and belief of the truth, is eſſential to the moſt happy chriſtian union and friendſhip. To him who loves the truth, error in others is diſagreeable and hateful, and that in proportion to the degree of his love of the truth, and pleaſure in it. Therefore, chriſtians love one another *in the truth*, as the Apoſtles and primitive chriſtians did. "The Elder, unto the well beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth."* Where there is no agreement and union in ſentiment, and belief of the truth, there is no foundation for chriſtian love and friendſhip. Love, without any regard to truth, is not chriſtian love. In this ſenſe, the knowledge and belief of the truth, and chriſtian love, cannot be ſeparated: And where there is no knowledge and belief of the truths of the goſpel, and agreement in ſentiment, there can be no union of heart, and true chriſtian love and friendſhip.†

As

* 3 John, verſe 1.

† They who talk of chriſtian union, love and charity, where there is no agreement in ſentiment, reſpecting the truths and doctrines of the goſpel, but a great difference and oppoſition; and think that doctrinal ſentiments are of no importance in chriſtianity; and that their having no belief of particular doctrines, and no creed; or differing in their religious ſentiments ever ſo much, is no impediment to the greateſt union and chriſtian friendſhip, ſeem not to know, what real chriſtian union, love and friendſhip is. It is certain they do not love one another *in the truth*, and *for the truth's ſake*, which dwelleth in them, as chriſtians did in the Apoſtles days, 2 John 1, 2. The catholiciſm and love for which they plead, appears to be a *political* love and union, which may in ſome meaſure unite civil worldly ſocieties; but has nothing of the nature of real chriſtianity, and that union and love by which the followers of Chriſt are ONE.

As light and knowledge will be greatly increaſed in the Millennium, and the great truths and doctrines contained in divine revelation will then be more clearly diſcerned, and appear in their true connection, excellence and importance, they will be underſtood and cordially embraced by all; and they will be united together in the ſame mind, and the ſame judgment; and by this be formed to a high degree of happy chriſtian union, love and friendſhip, loving one another in the truth, with a pure heart fervently. Thus were the primitive chriſtians united in knowing and obeying the truth, whom the Apoſtle Peter thus addreſſes: "Seeing ye have purified your ſouls in *obeying the truth* through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren; ſee that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."* In that day the promiſe and prophecy ſpoken by Jeremiah, will be accompliſhed, to a greater extent and degree than it ever was before. "And I will give them one heart, and *one way*, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them."†

V. THE Millennium will be a time of great enjoyment, happineſs and univerſal joy.

This is often mentioned in prophecy, as what will take place in that day, in a peculiar manner and high degree. "For ye ſhall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: The mountains and the hills ſhall break forth before you into ſinging, and all the trees of the field ſhall clap their hands. Be you glad, and rejoice forever in that which I create; for I create Jeruſalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy."‡ The enjoyments of that day are repreſented by a rich and plentiful feaſt for all people, conſiſting in proviſion of the moſt agreeable and delicious kind. "And in this mountain ſhall the Lord of hoſts make unto all people a feaſt of fat things, a feaſt of wines on the lees, a feaſt of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined."§ The enjoyments and happineſs of the Millennium, are compared to a marriage ſupper. "Let us rejoice and give honour to him: For the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herſelf ready. Bleſſed are they who are called unto the marriage ſupper of the Lamb."‖ And there will be a great increaſe of happineſs and joy in heaven, at the introduction of that day, and during the continuance of it."¶

* 1 Pet. i. 22. † Jer. xxxii. 39. ‡ Iſai. lv. 12. lxv. 18.
§ Iſai. xxv. 6. ‖ Rev. xix. 7, 9. ¶ Rev. xviii. 20. xix. 1—7.

"There ſhall be joy in heaven, and there is joy in the preſence of the angels of God, over one ſinner that repenteth."*

And this great increaſe of happineſs and joy on earth will be the natural and even neceſſary conſequence, of the great degree and univerſality of knowledge and holineſs, which all will then profeſs. The knowledge of God, and the Redeemer, and love to him, will be the ſource of unſpeakable pleaſure and joy in his character, government and kingdom. And the more the great truths of divine revelation are opened and come into view, and the wiſdom and grace of God in the work of redemption, are ſeen; the more they are contemplated and reliſhed, the greater will be their enjoyment and happineſs; and great will be their evidence and aſſurance of the love and favour of God, and that they ſhall enjoy him, and all the bleſſings and glory of his kingdom forever.—Then, as it is predicted of that time, "The work of righteouſneſs ſhall be peace, and the effect of righteouſneſs, quietneſs and aſſurance forever."† Then the eminent degree of righteouſneſs or holineſs, to which all ſhall arrive, will be attended with great enjoyment and happineſs, which is often meant by *peace* in ſcripture. And the effect and conſequence of this high degree of holineſs, and happineſs, in ſeeing and loving God and divine truth, ſhall be, that they ſhall have a ſteady, quiet aſſurance of the love of God, and of his favour forever, which will greatly add to their happineſs.‡

They will have unſpeakable ſatisfaction and delight in worſhipping God in ſecret, and in ſocial worſhip, whether more private or public. And their meditations and ſtudy on divine things will be ſweet. The word of God will be to them ſweeter than honey or the honey comb; and they will rejoice in the truths there revealed,

* Luke xv. 7, 10. † Iſai. xxxii. 17.

‡ Note. Aſſurance of the love of God, and of enjoying his favour forever, is here ſaid to be the *effect* of the exerciſe of holineſs, and that peace of ſoul and enjoyment which attends it: So that perſons muſt *firſt* be holy, and love God, *before* they can have any aſſurance or evidence that God loves them, and that they ſhall be ſaved; the latter being the effect, and not the cauſe of the former. They therefore turn things upſide down, and contradict this paſſage, and the whole of divine revelation, and even all reaſon and common ſenſe, who hold that perſons muſt *firſt* have aſſurance, or at leaſt believe, that God loves them, with an everlaſting love, *before* they can love God, or exerciſe any degree of true holineſs: And that the latter is the effect of the former!

revealed, more than the men of the world ever did, or can do in all riches. In public assemblies, while the heart and lips of the preacher will glow with heavenly truth, and he pours light and instruction on a numerous congregation, they will all hang upon his lips, and drink in the divine sentiments which are communicated, with a high relish and delight. And in such entertainments there will be enjoyed unspeakably more real pleasure and happiness, than all the men of the world ever found in the most gay, brilliant company, with the most agreeable festivity and mirth, music and dancing, that is possible. The latter is not worthy to be compared with the former.

Then religious enjoyment, whether in company or alone, will appear to be a reality, and of the highest and most noble kind; and every one will be a witness and instance of it. There will then be no briar and thorns to molest enjoyment, or render company disagreeable; but all will be amiable, happy and full of love, and render themselves agreeable to every one. Every one will behave with decency and propriety towards all, agreeable to his station and connections. The law of kindness will be on the tongues of all; and true friendship, of which there is so little among men now, will then be common and universal, even christian love and friendship, which is the most excellent kind of friendship, and is indeed the only real, happy, lasting friendship. And this will lay a foundation for a peculiar, happy intimacy and friendship, in the nearest relations and connections: By which conjugal and domestic duties will be faithfully performed; and the happiness of those relations will be very great; and the end of the institutions of marriage, and families, be answered in a much greater degree, than ever before, and they will have their proper effect, in promoting the enjoyment of individuals, and the good of society.

Then the happiness and joy each one will have in the welfare of others, and the blessings bestowed on them, will be very great. Now the few christians who exercise disinterested benevolence, have, as the Apostle Paul had, great heaviness, and continual sorrow in their hearts, while they behold so many miserable objects: And are surrounded with those who are unhappy in this world, and appear to be going to everlasting destruction, by their folly and obstinacy in sin. They have great comfort and joy, indeed, in the few who appear to be christians, and heirs of eternal life.—When they see persons who appear to understand and love the

doctrines of the gospel, and to have imbibed the amiable, excellent spirit of christianity, and to be the blessed favourites of heaven, they greatly rejoice with them in their happiness, and can say, as Paul did, "What thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy wherewith we rejoice *for your sakes* before our God!"* But in the Millennium, the happiness and joy of each one, will be unspeakably greater, in the character and happiness of all. The benevolence of every one will be gratified and pleased to a very high degree, by all whom he beholds, all with whom he converses, and of whom he thinks; and in their amiable character, and great happiness, he will have pleasure and joy, in proportion to the degree of his benevolence, which will vastly surpass that degree of it, which the best christians now exercise. There will then be no such infinitely miserable objects, which are now every where to be seen, to excite painful grief and sorrow; and the character of christians will then be much more beautiful and excellent, than that of real christians is now, as they will abound so much more in all holy exercise and practice; and their present enjoyment, and future happiness in heaven, will be more evident and realized by each one, which will give pleasure and joy to every one, in the amiable character and happiness of others, even beyond all our present conceptions. "There shall be no more a pricking briar unto the church, or particular christians, nor any grieving thorn, of all that are round about them."† But all will live in pleasing harmony and friendship; and every one will consider himself as surrounded with amiable friends, though he may have no particular connection or acquaintance with them, and all he will see or meet as he passes in the public streets, or elsewhere, will give him a peculiar pleasure, as he will have good reason to consider them to be friends to Christ, and to him, and as professing the peculiarly amiable character of christians: And this pleasure will be mutual between those who have no particular knowledge of each other. But this enjoyment and pleasure will rise much higher between those who are particularly acquainted with each others character, exercises and circumstances; and especially those who are in a more near connection with each other, and whose circumstances and opportunities, lead them to form and cultivate a peculiar intimacy and friendship.

But it is not to be supposed that we are now able to give a proper and full description, or to form an adequate idea of the happiness,

* 1 Thess. iii. 9. † Ezek. xxviii. 24.

pineſs, joy and glory of that day; but all that is attempted, and our moſt enlarged and pleaſing conceptions, fall much ſhort of the truth, which cannot be fully known, till that happy time ſhall come. They who now have the beſt and higheſt taſte for divine truth, and the greateſt religious enjoyment, who abound moſt in chriſtian love, and have the moſt experience of the happineſs of chriſtian friendſhip, and attend moſt to the Bible, and ſtudy the predictions of that day, will doubtleſs have the cleareſt view of it, and moſt agreeable to the truth, and the higheſt ſatisfaction and pleaſure, in the proſpect of it.

THERE are many other things and circumſtances which will take place in that day, which are implied in what has now been obſerved, or may be inferred from it, and from the ſcripture, by which the advantages, happineſs and glory of the Millennium will be promoted; ſome of which will be mentioned in the following particulars:

1. All outward worldly circumſtances will then be agreeable and proſperous, and there will be for all, a ſufficiency and fulneſs of every thing needed for the body, and for the comfort and convenience of every one.

This may be inferred from many paſſages of ſcripture, which refer to that day; among which are the following: "Then ſhall the earth yield her increaſe; and God, even our own God, ſhall bleſs us."* "Then ſhall he give the rain of thy ſeed; that thou ſhalt ſow the ground withal, and bread of the increaſe of the earth, and it ſhall be fat and plenteous: In that day ſhall thy cattle feed in large paſtures. The oxen likewiſe, and the young aſſes that ear the ground, ſhall eat clear provender, which hath been winnowed with the ſhovel and with the fan. And the inhabitant ſhall not ſay, I am ſick. And they ſhall build houſes, and inhabit them; and they ſhall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They ſhall not build, and another inhabit; they ſhall not plant, and another eat: For as the days of a tree, are the days of my people, and mine elect ſhall long enjoy the work of their hands. They ſhall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble: For they are the ſeed of the bleſſed of the Lord, and their offſpring with them."† "They ſhall ſit every man under his vine, and

* Pſalms lxvii. 6.

† Iſai. xxx. 23, 24. xxxiii. 24. lxv. 21, 22, 23. Ezek. xxxiv. 23—27.

and under his fig tree, and none ſhall make him afraid."* "The ſeed ſhall be proſperous, the vine ſhall give her fruit, and the ground ſhall give her increaſe, and the heavens ſhall give their dew; and I will cauſe the remnant of this people to poſſeſs all theſe things."†

This plenty, and fulneſs of the things of this life, and worldly proſperity, by which all will be in eaſy, comfortable circumſtances, as to outward conveniences, and temporal enjoyment, will be owing to the following things:

1. To the kindneſs and peculiar bleſſing of God in his providence. When all the inhabitants of the world ſhall become eminently pious, and devote all they have or can enjoy in this world, to God, to the reigning Saviour, he will ſmile upon men in his providence, and bleſs them in the city, and in the field, in the fruit of the ground, in the increaſe of their herds, and of their flocks, in their baſket and in their ſtore, as he promiſed he would bleſs the children of Iſrael, if they would be obedient to him.‡ There will be no more unſuitable ſeaſons or calamitous events, to prevent or deſtroy the fruits of the earth; but every circumſtance with regard to rains and the ſhining of the ſun, heat and cold, will be ſo ordered, as to render the earth fertile, and ſucceed the labour of man in cultivating it: And there will be nothing to devour and deſtroy the fruit of the field.

2. To the great degree of benevolence, virtue and wiſdom, which all will then have and exerciſe, with reſpect to the affairs of this world. There will then be no war to impoveriſh, lay waſte and deſtroy. This has been a vaſt expenſe and ſcourge to mankind in all ages, by which poverty and diſtreſs have been ſpread among all nations; and the fruits of the earth, produced and ſtored by the hard labour of man, have been devoured, and worſe than loſt. Then there will be no unrighteous perſons, who ſhall be diſpoſed to invade the rights and property of others, or deprive them of what juſtly belongs to them; but every one ſhall ſecurely ſit under his own vine, and fig tree; and there ſhall be none to make him afraid. Then there will be no law ſuits, which now, in civilized nations, are ſo vexatious and very expenſive of time and money. Then, by the temperance in all things, which will be practiſed, and the prudent and wiſe care of the body, and by the ſmiles of heaven, there will be no expenſive, diſtreſſing, deſolating

* Mich. iv. 4. † Zech. viii. 12. ‡ Deut. xxviii. 1—8.

ſolating peſtilence and ſickneſs; but general health will be enjoyed; by which much expenſe of time and money will be prevented.

The intemperance, exceſs, extravagance and waſte, in food and raiment, and the uſe of the things of life, which were before practiſed, will be diſcarded and ceaſe, in that day. By theſe, a great part of the productions of the earth, which are for the comfort and convenience of man, are now waſted and worſe than loſt, as they are, in innumerable inſtances, the cauſe of debility of body, ſickneſs and death. But every thing of this kind will be uſed with great prudence and economy; and in that way, meaſure and degree, which will beſt anſwer the ends of food, drink and clothing, and all other furniture, ſo as to be moſt comfortable, decent and convenient, and in the beſt manner furniſh perſons for their proper buſineſs and duty. Nothing will be ſought or uſed to gratify pride inordinate, ſenſual appetite or luſt: So that there will be no waſte of the things of life: Nothing will be loſt.

And at that time, the art of huſbandry will be greatly advanced, and men will have ſkill to cultivate and manure the earth, in a much better and more eaſy way, than ever before; ſo that the ſame land will then produce much more than it does now, twenty, thirty, ſixty, and perhaps an hundred fold more. And that which is now eſteemed barren, and not capable of producing any thing, by cultivation, will then yield much more, for the ſuſtenance of man and beaſt, than that which is moſt productive now: So that a very little ſpot will then produce more of the neceſſaries and comforts of life, than large tracts of land do now. And in this way, the curſe which has hitherto been upon the ground, for the rebellion of man, will be in a great meaſure removed.

There will alſo doubtleſs, be great improvement and advances made in all thoſe mechanic arts, by which the earth will be ſubdued and cultivated, and all the neceſſary and convenient articles of life, ſuch as all utenſils, clothing, buildings, &c. will be formed and made, in a better manner, and with much leſs labour, than they now are. There may be inventions and arts of this kind, which are beyond our preſent conception. And if they could be now known by any one, and he could tell what they will be, they would be thought by moſt, to be utterly incredible and impoſſible; as thoſe inventions and arts, which are now known and familiar to us, would have appeared to thoſe who lived before they were found out and took place.

It

It is not impoſſible, but very probable, that ways will yet be found out by men, to cut rocks and ſtones into any ſhape they pleaſe; and to remove them from place to place, with as little labour, as that with which they now cut and remove the ſofteſt and lighteſt wood, in order to build houſes, fences, bridges, paving roads, &c. And thoſe huge rocks and ſtones, which now appear to be uſeleſs, and even a nuiſance, may then be found to be made, and reſerved by him who is infinitely wiſe and good, for great uſefulneſs, and important purpoſes. Perhaps there is good reaſon not to doubt of this. And can he doubt of it, who conſiders what inventions and arts have taken place in latter ages, which are as much an advance beyond what was known or thought of in ages before, as ſuch an art would be, beyond what is now known and practiſed? The art by which they removed great ſtones, and raiſed them to a vaſt height, by which they built the pyramids in Egypt; and that by which huge ſtones were cut and put into the temple of Jeruſalem, is now loſt, and it cannot be conceived how this was done. This art may be revived in the Millennium; and there may be other inventions and arts, to us, inconceivably greater and more uſeful than that. Then, in a literal ſenſe, The vallies ſhall be filled, and the mountains and hills ſhall be made low, and the crooked ſhall be made ſtraight, and the rough ways ſhall be made ſmooth, to render travelling more convenient and eaſy, and the earth more productive and fertile.

When all theſe things are conſidered, which have now been ſuggeſted, and others which will naturally occur to them who attend to this ſubject, it will appear evident, that in the days of the Millennium, there will be a fulneſs and plenty of all the neceſſaries and conveniences of life, to render all much more eaſy and comfortable, in their worldly circumſtances and enjoyments, than ever before, and with much leſs labour and toil: And that it will not be then neceſſary for any men or women to ſpend all, or the greateſt part of their time in labour, in order to procure a living, and enjoy all the comforts and deſirable conveniencies of life. It will not be neceſſary for each one, to labour more than two or three hours in a day, and not more than will conduce to the health and vigour of the body. And the reſt of their time they will be diſpoſed to ſpend in reading and converſation, and in all thoſe exerciſes which are neceſſary and proper, in order to improve their minds, and make progreſs in knowledge; eſpecially in the know-

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ledge of divinity: And in ſtudying the ſcriptures, and in private and ſocial and public worſhip, and attending on public inſtruction, &c. When the earth ſhall be all ſubdued, and prepared in the beſt manner for cultivation, and houſes and incloſures, and other neceſſary and convenient buildings ſhall be erected, and completely finiſhed, conſiſting of the moſt durable materials, the labour will not be hard, and will require but a ſmall portion of their time, in order to ſupply every one with all the neceſſaries and conveniences of live: And the reſt of their time will not be ſpent in diſſipation or idleneſs, but in buſineſs, more entertaining and important, which has been now mentioned.

And there will be then ſuch benevolence and fervent charity in every heart, that if any one ſhall be reduced to a ſtate of want by ſome caſuality, or by inability to provide for himſelf, he will have all the relief and aſſiſtance that he could deſire; and there will be ſuch a mutual care and aſſiſtance of each other, that all worldly things will be in a great degree, and in the beſt manner common; ſo as not to be withheld from any who may want them; and they will take great delight in miniſtering to others and ſerving them, whenever, and in whatever ways, there ſhall be opportunity to do it.

2. In that day, mankind will greatly multiply and and increaſe in number, till the earth ſhall be filled with them.

When God firſt made mankind, he ſaid to them, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and repleniſh, (or fill) the earth, and ſubdue it."* And he renewed this command to Noah and his ſons, after the flood, and in them to mankind in general. "And God bleſſed Noah and his ſons, and ſaid unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and repleniſh the earth."† This command has never yet been obeyed by mankind; they have yet done but little, compared with what they ought to have done, in ſubduing and filling the earth. Inſtead of this, they have ſpent great part of their time and ſtrength in ſubduing and deſtroying each other; and in that impiety, intemperance, folly and wickedneſs, which have brought the divine judgments upon them; and they have been reduced and deſtroyed in all ages by famine, peſtilence and poverty, and innumerable calamities and evil occurrents; ſo that by far the greateſt part of the earth remains yet unſubdued, and lies waſte without inhabitants. And where it has been moſt ſubdued and cultivated

* Gen. i. 28. † Gen. ix. 1.

and populous, it has been, and ſtill is, far from being filled with inhabitants, ſo that it could ſupport no more, except in a very few inſtances, if in any. An exact calculation cannot be made; but it is preſumed that every man, who conſiders the things which have been mentioned above, will be ſenſible that this earth may be made capable of ſuſtaining thouſands to one of mankind who now inhabit it; ſo that if each one were multiplied to many thouſands, the earth would not be more than filled, and all might have ample proviſion for their ſuſtenance, convenience and comfort.—This will not take place, ſo long as the world of mankind continue to exerciſe ſo much ſelfiſhneſs, unrighteouſneſs and impiety as they do now, and always have done: But there is reaſon to think they will be greatly diminiſhed, by their deſtroying themſelves, and one another, and by remarkable divine judgments, which will be particularly conſidered in a following ſection.

But when the Millennium ſhall begin, the inhabitants which ſhall then be on the earth, will be diſpoſed to obey the divine command, to ſubdue the earth, and multiply, until they have filled it; and they will have ſkill, and be under all deſirable advantages to do it; and the earth will be ſoon repleniſhed with inhabitants, and be brought to a ſtate of high cultivation and improvement, in every part of it, and will bring forth abundantly for the full ſupply of all; and there will be many thouſand times more people than ever exiſted before at once in the world. Then the following prophecy, which relates to that day, ſhall be fulfilled: "A little one ſhall become a thouſand, and a ſmall one a ſtrong nation. I the Lord will haſten it in his time."* And there is reaſon to think the earth will be then, in ſome degree, enlarged in more ways than can now be mentioned, or thought of. In many thouſands, hundred of thouſands, yea, millions of inſtances, large tracts now covered with water, coves and arms of the ſea, may be drained, or the water ſhut out by banks and walls; ſo that hundreds of millions of perſons may live on thoſe places, and be ſuſtained by the produce of them, which are now overflowed with water.—Who can doubt of this, who recollects how many millions of people now inhabit Holland and the Low Countries, the greateſt part of which was once covered with the ſea, or thought not to be capable of improvement? Other inſtances might be mentioned.

Though there will be ſo many millions of millions of people on the earth at the ſame time, this will not be the leaſt inconveni-

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* Iſai. lx. 22.

ence to any; but the contrary; for each one will be fully ſupplied with all he wants, and they will all be united in love, as brethren of one family, and will be mutual helps and bleſſings to each other. They will die, or rather fall aſleep, and paſs into the inviſible world; and others will come on the ſtage in their room. But death then will not be attended with the ſame calamitous and terrible circumſtances as it has been, and is now; and will not be conſidered as an evil. It will not be brought on with long and painful ſickneſs, or be accompanied with any great diſtreſs of body or mind. They will be in all reſpects ready for it, and welcome it with the greateſt comfort and joy. Every one will die at the time, and in the manner which will be beſt for him, and all with whom he is connected: And death will not bring diſtreſs on ſurviving relatives and friends; and they will rather rejoice than mourn, while they have a lively ſenſe of the wiſdom and goodneſs of the will of God, and of the greater happineſs of the inviſible world, to which their beloved friends are gone; and where they expect ſoon to arrive. So that in that day, death will in a great meaſure looſe his ſting, and have the appearance of a friend, and be welcomed by all as ſuch.

3. In the Millennium, all will probably ſpeak *one language*: So that one language ſhall he known and underſtood all over the world, when it ſhall be filled with inhabitants innumerable.

The whole earth was once, and originally of one language, and of one ſpeech.* And the folly and rebellion of men was the occaſion of their being confounded in ſpeaking and underſtanding this one language, and the introduction of a variety of languages. This was conſidered as in itſelf a great calamity, and was ordered as ſuch: And it can be conſidered in no other light. Had men been diſpoſed to improve the advantages of all ſpeaking and underſtanding one language, to wiſe and good purpoſes, this diverſity never would have taken place. And when men ſhall become univerſally pious, virtuous and benevolent, and be diſpoſed to uſe ſuch an advantage and bleſſing as having one ſpeech and language will be, for the glory of God and the general good, it will doubtleſs be reſtored to them again. This may eaſily and ſoon be done, without a miracle, when mankind and the ſtate of the world ſhall be ripe for it. When they ſhall all become as one family in affection, and diſcerning and wiſdom ſhall preſide and govern in all

* Gen. xi. 1, 6.

their affairs, they will ſoon be ſenſible of the great diſadvantage of being divided into ſo many different tongues, which will greatly impede that univerſal free intercourſe which will be very deſirable; and of the advantage of all ſpeaking and uſing one language. And God may ſo order things in his providence that it will then be eaſy for the moſt learned and wiſe to determine which is the beſt language to be adopted, to be univerſally taught and ſpoken.—And when this ſhall be once determined, and publiſhed through the world, by thoſe who are acknowledged to be the wiſeſt men, and beſt able to fix upon a language that ſhall be univerſal, and have a right to do it, all will freely conſent to the propoſal. And that language will be taught in all ſchools, and uſed in public writings, and books that ſhall be printed; and in a few years will become the common language, underſtood and ſpoken by all; and all or moſt of the different languages now in the world will be forgotten and loſt. All the learning and knowledge of former ages, contained in books, in different languages, worth preſerving, will be introduced and publiſhed in the univerſal language, and communicated to all. This will in a great meaſure, ſuperſede and render uſeleſs the great expenſe of time, toil and money, which is now beſtowed on teaching and ſtudying what are called the *learned languages.* Many thouſands if not millions of youths are now conſuming years in learning theſe languages, at great expenſe of money: And thouſands of teachers are ſpending their lives in attending to them. It is thought by many now, that this is a uſeleſs and imprudent waſte of time and money, in moſt inſtances, at leaſt: It will appear to be much more ſo, when there ſhall be one univerſal language, which ſhall be underſtood and ſpoken by all; and when the books written in that language ſhall contain all the uſeful learning and knowledge in the world; and all farther improvements will be communicated to the world in that language.

And when this language ſhall be eſtabliſhed, and become univerſal, all the learning and wiſdom in the world, will tend and ſerve to improve it, and render it more and more perfect. And there can be no doubt that ſuch improvements will be made that perſons will be able to communicate their ideas with more eaſe and preciſion, and with leſs ambiguity and danger of being miſunderſtood, than could be done before.

And

And ways will be invented to learn children to read this language with propriety, and to ſpell and write it with correctneſs, with more eaſe, and in much leſs time, than it is now done, and with little labour and coſt. And ways may be invented, perhaps ſomething like the ſhort hands, which are now uſed by many, by which they will be able to communicate their ideas, and hold intercourſe and correſpondence with each other, who live in different parts of the world, with much leſs expenſe of time and labour, perhaps an hundred times leſs, than that with which men now correſpond.

This will alſo greatly facilitate the ſpreading uſeful knowledge, and all kinds of intelligence, which may be a benefit to mankind, to all parts of the world; and render books very cheap, and eaſy to be obtained by all. There will then be no need of tranſlations into other languages, and numerous new impreſſions, in order to have the moſt uſeful books read by all. Many hundreds of thouſands of copies may be caſt off by one impreſſion, and ſpread over all the earth. And the Bible, one of which, at leaſt, every perſon will have, by printing ſuch a vaſt number of them at one impreſſion, may be afforded much cheaper than it can be now; even though it ſhould be ſuppoſed that no improvement will be made in the art of printing, and making paper, which cannot be reaſonably ſuppoſed; but the contrary is much more probable, viz. that both theſe will then be performed, in a better manner, and with much leſs labour and expenſe, than they are now executed. None can doubt of this, who conſider what improvements have been made in theſe arts, ſince they were firſt invented.

This univerſality of language will tend to cement the world of mankind ſo as to make them *one*, in a higher degree, and to greater advantage, than otherwiſe could be. This will abſorb the diſtinctions that are now kept up between nations ſpeaking different languages, and promote a general, free communication. It is obſerved, when there was but one language in the world, that the people were *one*.* And this will greatly facilitate their united exertions, to effect whatever may be for the public good.

Therefore, ſince there will be ſo many and great advantages, in having one univerſal language, underſtood and uſed by all mankind, and it will anſwer ſo many good purpoſes, when men ſhall be diſpoſed to make a right improvement of it; and ſince it may be ſo eaſily effected, when men ſhall be united in piety and benev-

olence,

* Gen. xi. 6.

olence, and wiſdom ſhall reign among them; there is reaſon to think that God will ſo order things in his providence, and ſo influence and turn the hearts of mankind, as in the moſt agreeable manner to introduce the beſt language, to be adopted and uſed by all, in that day, in which great and peculiar favour and bleſſings will be granted to the world; far beyond thoſe which had been given in preceding ages. And this is agreeable to the ſcripture, which ſpeaks of that day, as diſtinguiſhed and remarkable for the union and happineſs of mankind, when they ſhall have *one heart, and one way.* And this ſeems to be expreſsly predicted: When ſpeaking of that time it is ſaid, "Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to ſerve him with one conſent."* Theſe words have been underſtood in another ſenſe; but the moſt natural and conſiſtent meaning ſeems to be, That the people ſhall not then have a mixed language, ſpeaking with different tongues, which would naturally ſeparate them into different parties, and render them barbarians to each other in their worſhip: But God will ſo order things at that time, that one language ſhall be introduced and ſpoken by all; and which ſhall be more perfect, elegant and pure, free from thoſe defects, inconſiſtencies, and that jargon, which before attended all, or moſt languages; that they may all, even all mankind, call upon the name of the Lord, with one voice, and in one language, to ſerve him with one conſent; by which they ſhall be united in worſhip, and divine ſervice, not only in heart, but in lip, as mankind never were before.

4. The church of Chriſt will then be formed and regulated, according to his laws and inſtitutions, in the moſt beautiful and pleaſing order.

This is implied in what has been ſaid; but is worthy of a more particular attention. There will then be but one univerſal, catholic church, comprehending all the inhabitants of the world, formed into numerous particular ſocieties and congregations, as ſhall be moſt convenient, to attend on public worſhip, and the inſtitutions of Chriſt. There will be no ſchiſms in the church then: Chriſtians will not be divided into various ſects and denominations; but there will be a beautiful and happy union in ſentiment, reſpecting the doctrines, worſhip and inſtitutions of Chriſt; and all will be of one heart, and one way, and ſerve Chriſt with one conſent. The ordinances of baptiſm and the Lord's

* Zeph. iii. 9.

Lord's supper, and all the institutions of Christ, will be attended in due order, with solemnity and decency; and being accompanied with divine efficacy, will have their proper and saving effect. All the children will be members of the church, having the initiating seal applied to them, and being solemnly devoted to Christ in baptism; and they will be faithfully brought up for him, and early discover their love to Christ, not only in words, but by obeying him, and attending upon all his institutions. The discipline which Christ has instituted, will be faithfully practised, so far as there shall be any occasion; and christians, by watching over each other in love, and exhorting and admonishing one another, will prevent, or immediately heal all offences. In those respects, and in others not here mentioned, and perhaps not thought of, the church of Christ will then be the best regulated, most beautiful and happy society that ever existed, or can be formed on earth. "When the Lord shall build up Zion, the church, he shall appear in his glory." Then, what is predicted in the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah, and many other prophecies of the same event, shall be fulfilled. God says to his church, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee: Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, the joy of many generations. I will make the place of my feet glorious. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God."*

5. Then

* It has been a question, Whether in the Millennium, when the church shall be thus universal, and be brought to such a well regulated, holy and happy state, there will be any need of civil rulers, to preside and govern in temporal matters? It is said, that every thing which will be necessary of this kind, will be regulated and ordered by particular churches, and civil officers will not be needed, and will have nothing to do.

But when it is considered, that the church of Christ is not a worldly society, and has no concern with temporal matters, and the concerns of the world, considered merely as such, or any farther than they are included in obedience to the laws of Christ: And that there will be need of regulations and laws or orders, with respect to the temporal concerns of mankind; it will appear proper and convenient, if not necessary, that there should be wise men chosen and appointed to superintend, and direct in worldly affairs, whose business it shall be to consult the temporal interest of men, and dictate those regulations from time to time, which shall promote the public good, and the temporal interest of individuals.

5. Then christianity will appear in its true beauty and excellence, and the nature and genuine effects of it will be more manifest than ever before, and the truth and amiableness of it be exhibited in a clear and striking light.

Christianity has hitherto been generally abused and perverted by those who have enjoyed the gospel; and but little of the genuine spirit and power of it has appeared among those who have been called christians. They have, the most of them, disobeyed the laws of Christ, and misrepresented and perverted the doctrines and institutions of the gospel, to accommodate it to the gratification of their selfishness, pride and worldly spirit; and have hated and persecuted one another unto death. They have divided into innumerable sects and parties, and have not been agreed in the doctrines and institutions of the gospel; but have embraced various and contrary opinions concerning them, and contended about them with wrath and bitterness. And the greatest part of the christian world have been as openly vicious, as the heathen nations, if not more so. And as the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles by the wicked lives of the Jews,* so the name of Christ has been blasphemed by infidels and others, through the various kinds of wickedness of those who have been called christians. By reason of whom, the way of truth has been evil spoken of."† But few in the christian world, in comparison with the rest, have honoured Christ, by entering into the true meaning and spirit of the gospel, loving it, and living agreeable to it: And those few have been generally hidden and overlooked by the multitude of merely nominal christians. And genuine christianity is not to be found in the faith and lives of those in general who assume the name of christians; but in the Bible only, since the most who profess to know Christ, by their doctrines and works do deny him.

But in the Millennium the scene will be changed, and christianity will be understood and acted out, in the true spirit and power of it, and have its genuine effect, in the lives and conduct of all. And when it comes to be thus reduced to practice by all, it will appear from fact and experience, to have a divine stamp; and that the gospel is indeed the wisdom of God, and the power of God, forming all who cordially embrace it to a truly amiable and excellent character, and is suited to make men happy in this world,

* Rom. ii. 24. † 2 Pet. ii. 2.

world, and that which is to come. Then all the disgrace and reproach, which has come upon Christ, his true followers, and upon christianity, by the wickedness and enmity of men, and the abuse of the gospel, shall be wiped off. This is foretold in the following words: "Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee, and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out, and I will get them praise and fame in every land, where they have been put to shame. I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth."* After the various schemes of false religion and infidelity have been tried by men, and the evil nature and bad effects of them discovered, real christianity, as it is stated in divine revelation, when it shall be understood by all, and appear in universal practice, will shine with peculiar lustre and glory; and the beauty and excellence of it, and the happiness it produces, will be more apparent and affecting, and be more admired, by the contrast, than if no such delusion and false religion had taken place. This is represented in the last words of David the Prophet. "And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain."†—When the sun rises in a clear morning, after a dark, stormy night, and the tender grass springs up fresh and lively, it is much more pleasant and refreshing, than if it had not been preceded by such a night.

6. The time of the Millennium will be in a peculiar and eminent sense and degree, *The day of salvation*, in which the Bible, and all the doctrines, commands and institutions contained in it, will have their proper and designed issue and effect; and that which precedes that day is preparatory to it, and suited in the best manner to introduce it, and render it eminently the gospel day.

The Spirit of God will then be poured out in his glorious fulness, and fill the world with holiness, and salvation, as floods upon the dry ground. All the preceding influences of the Holy Spirit, in converting and saving men, are but the first fruits, which precede the harvest, which will take place in that latter day. This was typified in the Mosaic institutions. The most remarkable festivals were the Passover, the feast of the first fruits, and the feast of Tabernacles, upon which all the males in Israel were commanded to attend at Jerusalem. The Passover typified the death

* Zeph. xix, 20. † 2 Sam. xxiii. 4.

of Chriſt, and he was crucified at the time of that feaſt. The feaſt of the firſt fruits, or Pentecoſt, as it is called in the New Teſtament, typified the firſt fruits of the death of Chriſt, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the converſion of men, when the goſpel was firſt preached, which took place at the time of this feaſt."* The feaſt of Tabernacles, which was "the feaſt of *ingathering*, which was in the end of the year;"† was a type of the Millennium, which will be in the latter end of the world, when the great and chief ingathering of ſouls to Chriſt and his church, ſhall take place. This is the time when Chriſt will ſee the fruit of the travel of his ſoul, and ſhall be ſatisfied. To this day moſt of the prophecies of Chriſt, and ſalvation, and of the good things which were coming to the church, have their principal reference, and they will have their chief fulfilment then. This is the day which our Lord ſaid Abraham ſaw with gladneſs and joy. "Your father Abraham rejoiced (or leaped forward) to ſee my day: And he ſaw it, and was glad."‡ He ſaw the day of Chriſt in the promiſe made to him, That in his ſeed all nations ſhould be bleſſed; which will be accompliſhed in the Millennium, and not before. This is the day of Chriſt, the day of his great ſucceſs and glory. This is the goſpel day, in compariſon with which all that precedes it, is night and darkneſs.

Then the chief end of divine revelation will be anſwered. It has been given with a chief reference to that time, and it will then be the mean of producing unſpeakably greater good, than in all ages before. It will then be no longer miſunderſtood, and perverted and abuſed, to ſupport error and wickedneſs; but be univerſally prized more than all riches, and improved to the beſt purpoſes, as the fountain of knowledge and wiſdom. And all the inſtitutions and ordinances appointed by Chriſt, will then have their chief effect. They will then be underſtood and take place in due order, and be attended in a proper manner; and the wiſdom and goodneſs of Chriſt in ordaining them, will be ſeen and experienced by all. Then the goſpel will be preached, as it never was before, ſince the days of inſpiration; in which the miniſters of the goſpel will be eminently burning and ſhining lights, exhibiting the important, affecting, glorious truths of the goſpel, in a clear and ſtriking light, and in a manner moſt agreeable and entertaining; which will fall into honeſt and good hearts, and be

* Acts ii. 1. † Exod. xxxiv. 22. ‡ John viii. 56.

be received with the higheſt reliſh and pleaſure, and bring forth fruit abundantly. The Sabbath will be a moſt pleaſant and profitable day, and improved to the beſt and moſt noble purpoſes. And the adminiſtration of baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper, according to divine inſtitution, will greatly conduce to the edification of the church, and appear in their true importance and uſefulneſs, as they never did before; theſe and all other inſtitutions of Chriſt, being appointed with ſpecial reference to that day, when they will have their chief uſe, and anſwer the end of their appointment.

As the winter in the natural world is preparatory to the ſpring and ſummer, and the rain and ſnow, the ſhining of the ſun, the wind and froſt, iſſue in the order, beauty and fruitfulneſs of the vegetable world; and have their proper effect in theſe; and the end of winter is anſwered chiefly in what takes place in the ſpring and ſummer, and the former is neceſſary to introduce the latter, and in the beſt manner to prepare for it: So in the moral world, or the church of Chriſt, what precedes the Millennium is as the winter, while the way is preparing for the ſummer, and all that takes place has reference to that happy ſeaſon, and is ſuited to introduce it in the beſt manner and moſt proper time, when the goſpel, ſo far as it reſpects the church in this world, and all the inſtitutions and ordinances of it, will have their genuine and chief effect, in the order, beauty, felicity and fruitfulneſs of the church.

SECTION III.

In which is conſidered which thouſand years of the world will be the Millennium, and when it will begin.

ALL who attend to the ſubject of the Millennium, will naturally inquire, When this happy time will take place; and how long it will be before it ſhall be introduced? And ſome who have undertaken to find from ſcripture, and to tell the preciſe time and the year when it will begin, have been evidently miſ-

taken, becauſe the time on which they fixed for this, is paſſed, and the event has not taken place. From this, ſome have concluded, that it is uncertain whether there will ever be ſuch a time; and others have exploded all attempts to find from ſcripture when this time will be.

Though there be good reaſon to conclude that the exact time, the particular day or year, of the beginning of the Millennium cannot be known, and that it will be introduced gradually, by different ſucceſſive great and remarkable events, the preciſe time of which cannot be known before they take place; and that the prophecies reſpecting it, are ſo formed on deſign, that no man can certainly know when the event predicted ſhall be accompliſhed, within a year, or a number of years, until it is manifeſt by the accompliſhment, as ſuch knowledge would anſwer no good end, but the contrary: Yet there is no reaſon to ſuppoſe that this is left wholly in the dark, and that it is impoſſible to know, within a thouſand, or hundreds of years, when this glorious day ſhall commence, which is ſo much the ſubject of prophecy, in which the glory which is to follow the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the afflictions of his church, will chiefly conſiſt, ſo far as it relates to the tranſactions of time.

Though it may be evident from ſcripture, that the ſeventh thouſand years of the world, will be the time of the proſperity of the church of Chriſt, on earth; yet this event may come on by degrees, and be in a meaſure introduced years before that time; and the church may not be brought to the moſt complete and happy ſtate of that day, but ſtill have farther advances to make, after this ſeventh thouſand years begin, and continue ſome years after they are ended: So that the particular year of the beginning or end of this time, cannot be known, before it actually takes place.

It is thought that there is reaſon to conclude from divine revelation, that the ſeventh millenary of the world, will be the time in which the church of Chriſt will enjoy a ſabbath of reſt, and be brought to its higheſt and chief proſperity in this world, which is ſo much the ſubject of ſcripture prophecy; and that the end of the world, and the day of general judgment, will take place ſoon after this Millennium is over. The following obſervations are deſigned to point out ſome of the evidence of this.

It

It has been already obſerved, That the creation of the natural world in ſix days, and the ſeventh being appointed to be a day of reſt, does afford an argument that the moral world, or the church and kingdom of Chriſt, of which the natural world is a deſigned type, in many reſpects, will be ſix thouſand years in forming, in order to be brought to ſuch a ſtate, as in the beſt manner to enjoy a thouſand years of reſt, peace and proſperity; a day in the natural world, in this inſtance, repreſenting a thouſand years in the moral world: And that time being thus divided into *ſevens*, to have a perpetual rotation to the end of it, denotes that the world is to ſtand but ſeven thouſand years, as "One day is with the Lord as a thouſand years, and a thouſand years as one day." And that this has been handed down as the opinion of many ancients, both Jews and Chriſtians.* It is acknowledged, that this argument is not ſufficient to eſtabliſh this point, conſidered by itſelf alone; but it is thought to have ſome weight, when joined with other arguments from ſcripture which coincide with this, and ſerve to ſtrengthen it.

It is obſervable, that the number *ſeven* is the moſt noted number mentioned in ſcripture, in many reſpects, and is a *ſacred number* above all others. And in the Moſaic ritual, which contained many typical inſtitutions, the Iſraelites were commanded, not only to obſerve every ſeventh day, as a day of reſt; but every ſeventh year as a Sabbath, and year of reſt. And the ſeventh month in every year, was a feſtival and ſacred month, above all other months of the year. In this month was the feaſt of Tabernacles, which was to be obſerved ſeven days with great joy. On the firſt day of this month was the feaſt of trumpets, when the trumpets were to be blown through all the land, which was a type of the extraordinary preaching of the goſpel which will introduce the Millennium. And on the tenth day was their annual and moſt ſolemn faſt, on which they were to confeſs their ſins and afflict their ſouls, and atonement was made for them. Which was a figure of the repentance and extraordinary humiliation, to which the inhabitants of the world will be brought, by the preaching of the goſpel, attended with the diſpenſations of divine providence ſuited to promote this, previous to their being raiſed up to the proſperity and joy of that day. And then the joyful feaſt of ingathering, in the end of the year, came on, on the fifteenth day of the ſame month.

* See Sect. I. Page 36, 37. with the note there.

month. This was a type of the happy, joyful Millennium in the ſeventh and laſt thouſand years of the world, in which vaſt multitudes, even moſt of the redeemed, will be gathered into the church and kingdom of Chriſt; in compariſon with whom, all who ſhall have been ſaved before this time, are but the firſt fruits of the purchaſe of Chriſt.

It is evident that this feaſt of Tabernacles in the ſeventh month, was a deſigned type of the Millennium, from what has been now obſerved, and what has been ſaid on the three moſt remarkable feaſts appointed in the law of Moſes, in the preceding ſection; but this evidence is ſtrengthened, and made certain, by what is ſaid by the Prophet Zechariah. When he is ſpeaking of the Millennium, and predicting that happy day, he ſays, "And it ſhall come to paſs, that every one that is left of all the nations which came againſt Jeruſalem, ſhall even go up from year to year to worſhip the King, the Lord of hoſts, *and to keep the feaſt of Tabernacles.*"* By the feaſt of Tabernacles are meant the enjoyments and bleſſings of the Millennium, of which all nations ſhall then partake, and which were typified by that feaſt.

All theſe things ſeem to point out the ſeventh thouſand years of the world to be the time of the Millennium. But there is yet greater evidence of this, which will ſerve to ſtrengthen what has been obſerved, and ſhew that it is not mere conjecture.

The prophecies in the book of Daniel, of the riſe and continuance of the little horn, and of the time in which the church ſhall be in a ſtate of affliction; and thoſe in the Revelation, of the continuance of the beaſt, who is the ſame with the horn; and of the duration of the afflicted ſtate of the church during that time, when examined, and compared, will lead to fix on the ſeventh thouſand years of the world to be the time of the Millennium.

In the Revelation, the time of the continuance of the beaſt, after his deadly wound was healed, is ſaid to be forty and two months.† And the time in which the church ſhould be trodden down, afflicted and oppreſſed, is ſaid to be forty and two months, a thouſand two hundred and ſixty days, and a time, and times, and half a time.‡ The ſame term of time is denoted by each of theſe expreſſions. A year was then reckoned to contain three hundred and ſixty days; and a month conſiſted of thirty days. In forty and two months were a thouſand two hundred and ſixty days.

* Zech. xiv. 16. † Chap. xiii. 5. ‡ Chap. xi. 2, 3. xii. 6, 14.

days. And a time, and times, and half a time, are three years and a half, which contain forty and two months, and a thouſand two hundred and ſixty days. So long the beaſt, the idolatrous perſecuting power, exerciſed by the Biſhop of Rome, the Pope, is to continue; during which time, the church of Chriſt is to be oppreſſed, afflicted and oppoſed, repreſented by the holy city being trodden under foot by the Gentiles; the two witneſſes prophecying in ſackcloth; and a woman perſecuted and flying into the wilderneſs, to hide herſelf from her enemies, where ſhe is fed and protected during the reign of the beaſt, which is to continue a thouſand two hundred and ſixty years, a prophetical day being a year. At the end of thoſe years, the Pope and the church of Rome, of which he is the head, will be deſtroyed. And according to the repreſentation in the Revelation, the kingdom of the devil in the world, will fall at the ſame time, and the kingdom of Chriſt be ſet up on the ruins of it, and the Millennium will take place.

If it were known when the Biſhop of Rome firſt became what is deſigned to be denoted by the beaſt, the time of his fall, and of the end of the church of Rome, and of ſatan's kingdom in the world, when the Millennium will commence, could not be aſcertained to a year. But as this beaſt roſe gradually from ſtep to ſtep, till he became a beaſt, in the higheſt and moſt proper ſenſe, this involves the ſubject in ſome degree of uncertainty, and renders it more difficult to determine, at which conſiderable increaſe and advance of the Biſhop of Rome in power and influence, the thouſand two hundred and ſixty years began. He had great influence, not only in the church, in eccleſiaſtical matters, but in the temporal affairs of the Roman empire, and of the kingdoms which were erected in it, by the invaſion of the northern nations, before he was publicly acknowledged and declared to be Univerſal Biſhop; which was done in the year of Chriſt, 606. This greatly increaſed his influence and power in the chriſtian world; and the church was now become exceeding corrupt. If the 1260 years be reckoned from this time, they will end in the year 1866, ſeventy four years from this time, viz, 1792. But the Pope did not become a temporal prince, and publicly aſſume civil juriſdiction, till the year 756, when Pepin, the king of France, then the moſt powerful prince in chriſtendom, made him prince over a large dominion, and he aſſumed civil authority, and upon this he ſubdued three kings or kingdoms, and

they

they fell before him, according to the prediction of him in the prophecy of Daniel.* And he ſoon had ſuch power over the nations, as to ſet up an emperor in Germany, to be his tool, by whom to raiſe himſelf to univerſal empire, reſerving to himſelf and claiming power over the emperor, and over all kings in the chriſtian world, to ſet them up and crown them, or depoſe them when he pleaſed.

This is the moſt remarkable epoch; when the Pope became a beaſt, in the moſt proper ſenſe, from whence his reign is to be dated. Twelve hundred and ſixty years from this date, 756, will end near the beginning of the ſeventh thouſandth years of the world. But as he roſe to this height gradually, and was a beaſt in a lower ſenſe long before this, it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe that he will fall by degrees, until his uſurped power is wholly taken from him, and the falſe church of Rome, the great whore, utterly deſtroyed; and that he has been falling many years; and that as the time of his reign draws nearer to a cloſe, more remarkable events, by which he and that church will come to total ruin, will take place in a more rapid ſucceſſion. But this will be more particularly conſidered in the next ſection.

Therefore, theſe prophecies of the riſe and fall of Antichriſt, or the beaſt, and the time of his reign, and of the afflicted ſtate of the church of Chriſt, fix the end of theſe, and of the reign of ſatan in the world of mankind, near the beginning of the ſeventh thouſand years of the world; when the Millennium will be introduced; though many things will take place before that time, by which the Pope and his intereſt will gradually decline and ſink, and in favour of the church and kingdom of Chriſt, to prepare the way for the introduction of the Millennium.

In the book of Dainel, the ſame idolatrous, perſecuting power, and the time of the continuance of it, and of the oppreſſed ſtate of the church, are predicted: And the time is fixed, and expreſſed by a time, and times, and an half, or the dividing of time;† which is the ſame mentioned by St. John, in the Revelation, and is 1260 prophetic days; that is, ſo many years, as has been obſerved above. There it is ſaid by him who interpreted to Daniel the viſion of the four beaſts, "The fourth beaſt ſhall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which ſhall be divers from all kingdoms, and ſhall devour the whole earth, and tread it down and break it in pieces." This is the Roman empire. "And the ten horns out of

* Chap. vii. 8, 20, 24. † Dan. vii. 25. xii. 7.

of this kingdom are ten kings that ſhall ariſe. And another ſhall ariſe after them, and he ſhall ſubdue three kings. And he ſhall ſpeak great words againſt the Moſt High, and ſhall wear out the ſaints of the Moſt High, and think to change times and laws: And they ſhall be given into his hand, until a time, and time, and the dividing of time."* This laſt horn, king or ruling power, is evidently the ſame with the little horn mentioned in the eighth chapter; and is the ſame with the beaſt when he was recovered to life, after he had been wounded unto death, which St. John ſaw, that is, the Pope of Rome, in whom the power and idolatry of this empire is revived and continued. The character given of each, is the ſame in ſubſtance; and the time of their continuance is the ſame, which much end, according to every probable calculation, at or about the end of the ſixth thouſand years of the world, or about two thouſand years after the incarnation of Chriſt.† And at the end of this time, this power and kingdom is to be deſtroyed, and a total end put to the Roman empire, repreſented by the beaſt: And the kingdom of Chriſt, in its fulneſs and glory, ſhall then take place, in the univerſal prevalence and reign of his church and people, which is expreſſed in the following words:— "But the judgment ſhall ſit, and they ſhall take away his dominion, to conſume and deſtroy it to the end. And the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatneſs of the kingdom under the whole heaven, ſhall be given to the people of the ſaints of the Moſt High, whoſe kingdom is an everlaſting kingdom, and all dominions ſhall ſerve and obey him."‡

In the eighth chapter of Daniel, we have a different repreſentation of this ſame kingdom, power or empire, by a little horn which came forth out of one of the four horns, into which the Grecian empire founded by Alexander the great, was divided, ſome time after his death. This is the Roman or fourth and laſt empire, upon the deſtruction of which the kingdom of Chriſt is to prevail, and fill the world. Daniel deſcribes this little horn, as it appeared to him in the viſion, in the following words: "And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeded great toward the ſouth, and toward the eaſt, and toward the pleaſant land. And it waxed great, even to the hoſt of heaven, and it caſt downſome of the hoſt, and of the ſtars, to the ground, and ſtamped

* Dan. vii. 23, 24, 25.

† See Biſhop Newton's Diſſertation on the Prophecies.

‡ Verſe 26, 27.

upon them. Yea, he magnified himſelf even to the prince of the hoſt, and by him the daily ſacrifice was taken away, and the place of his ſanctuary was caſt down. And an hoſt was given him againſt the daily ſacrifice, by reaſon of tranſgreſſion, and it caſt down the truth to the ground, and it practiſed and proſpered."* And this viſion is explained by the angel interpreter in the following part of the chapter.† What is ſaid of this horn reſpects the Roman kingdom and empire, from the beginning and end of it, the ruin of which ſhall open the way for the kingdom of Chriſt to flouriſh in the world, and the reign of the ſaints on the earth. And what is ſaid of this power or kingdom here, reſpects the idolatry that ſhould be ſupported and practiſed by it, and the oppoſition it ſhould make to God and his people, in which it ſhould prevail, and have power to oppreſs and perſecute the ſaints; and there is ſpecial reference to the Pope and thoſe under his influence and direction, when he ſhould be at the head of this empire, and rule in it, who is particularly deſigned in the ſeventh chapter, denoted by the little horn, "which had eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth ſpeaking great things; which ſhould make war with the ſaints, and prevail againſt them; and ſpeak great words againſt the Moſt High, and wear out the ſaints of the Moſt High."‡ This power, indeed, did oppoſe and deſtroy the mighty and holy people, and ſtand up againſt the Prince of princes, before it exiſted, and was exerciſed by antichriſt, in the church of Rome. Jeſus Chriſt the Prince of princes, was put to death by this power.—And this horn perſecuted the church, eſpecially at times, for near three hundred years after the death of Chriſt; all of which is included in the deſcription of the horn or kingdom, which is the chief ſubject of this chapter; but there is particular and chief reference to what this power would be and do, when in the hands of antichriſt, for he, above all others, has ſpoken great things, and opened his mouth to blaſpheme God and the ſaints: He has introduced and promoted the groſſeſt idolatry, and ſtood up againſt the Prince of princes; has magnified himſelf in his heart even to the Prince of the hoſt, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and has been the moſt cruel and bloody perſecutor of the ſaints for many ages: He has caſt down the truth to the ground, and practiſed and proſpered, and has deſtroyed vaſt numbers of the holy people, or the ſaints. Gabriel, who was ordered to make Daniel underſtand the viſion, ſaid to him, "Behold, I will make thee know what ſhall be *in the laſt*

* Verſe 9, 10, 11, 12. † Verſe 23—25. ‡ Verſe 8, 21, 25.

laſt end of the indignation: For at the time appointed the end ſhall be."* His interpretation had chief reſpect to the latter end of this kingdom, under the reign of antichriſt, in whoſe end the kingdom ſhould be ruined, and exiſt no more.

The queſtion is here aſked, "How long ſhall be the viſion concerning the daily ſacrifice, and the tranſgreſſion of deſolation, to give both the ſanctuary and the hoſt to be trodden under foot?" Biſhop Newton ſays, "In the original there is no ſuch word as *concerning*; and Mr. Lowth rightly obſerves, that the words may be rendered more agreeably to the Hebrew thus, *For how long a time ſhall the viſion laſt, the daily ſacrifice be taken away, and the tranſgreſſion of the deſolation continue, &c.* After the ſame manner the queſtion is tranſlated by the ſeventy, and in the Arabic verſion, and in the Vulgar Latin."

The anſwer is, "Unto two thouſand and three hundred days; then ſhall the ſanctuary be cleanſed."† Theſe are no doubt prophetical days, a day being put for a year. The time therefore ſpecified is two thouſand and three hundred years. All the difficulty in fixing on the time of the end of theſe days, lies in determining at what time the reckoning begins. This is left in a degree of uncertainty, as is the beginning of the reign of antichriſt, which is to continue twelve hundred and ſixty years; the reaſon of which doubtleſs is, that it ſhould not be preciſely known to a day or year, when this time will end, till it ſhall be actually accompliſhed, while it is made certain, the time of the end is fixed, and they who are willing to attend to the ſubject, and make uſe of all the light that is offered, may have ſufficient evidence to determine within a few years when the time will be, and not be left in a total uncertainty about it.

The little horn, which is the chief ſubject of this viſion, and was to do ſuch great things againſt the holy people, the church, came forth out of one of the four notable horns, toward the four winds of heaven, which grew out of the goat, after the one great horn was broken, which the goat had at firſt.‡ The goat is the king of Grecia, or the Grecian empire, erected by Alexander the great, who was the firſt king, or the great horn.§ After the death of Alexander, and when his ſucceſſors in his family were extinct, four kings were ſet up, and divided the great empire between them into four kingdoms, which diviſion was toward, or according

* Verſe 19. † Verſes 13, 14. ‡ Verſe 8. § Verſe 21.

to the four winds, East, West, North and South. Cassander, one of the four kings, took the western part of the empire, or the western kingdom, containing Macedon, Greece, &c. Out of this horn came forth the little horn, which "waxed exceeding great, toward the South, and toward the East, and toward the pleasant land."* This horn Gabriel explains to be "A king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, who shall stand up."† The Romans are meant by this horn, who were west of Greece, and may be considered as included in the western part of the empire, which was one of the four horns, out of which they rose, and soon were conspicuous; and Prideaux says, "Their name began to grow of great note and fame among foreign nations," by their conquests in a few, not above five or six twenty years, after the above mentioned partition of the empire of the goat, into four horns or kingdoms. And they were a distinct people, and doubtless made some figure, when the four horns first existed. From this time, and this small beginning, the Romans arose by their policy, power and conquests, until they arrived to a vast and universal empire. And as they existed as a people when the Grecian empire was divided into four kingdoms or horns, and they were really included in the western horn, and soon rose out of it, and went on and grew to universal empire, their beginning may properly be reckoned from the time when the western horn or kingdom arose, in which they were included, as they soon after that, became a distinct power and kingdom, and were a little horn, and proceeded to conquer and destroy the horn, out of which they came, and to subdue all the other horns.

This partition of the Grecian empire into four kingdoms or horns, was just about three hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ, or the beginning of the christian era. And as the incarnation of Christ was about the beginning of the fifth thousand years of the world, two thousand and three hundred years from the rise of the four horns will end at or near the beginning of the seventh thousand years of the world. Or if the beginning of the little horn should not be reckoned from that time, but from the time when the Roman power or horn began to be conspicuous and acknowledged among the nations, two thousand three hundred years from that time, will carry them but a few years beyond the beginning of the seventh thousand years of the world; so

* Verse 9. † Verse 23.

ſo that this number ſerves to confirm what has been obſerved from the other numbers in Daniel, and the Revelation, viz. That the reign of antichriſt, who is the laſt head of the Roman empire, will end about the beginning of the ſeventh millenary of the world, when the Millennium will begin, and the meek, the ſaints, ſhall inherit the earth, take the kingdom and reign with Chriſt.

In the laſt chapter of Daniel, "One ſaid to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long ſhall it be to the end of theſe wonders?" The anſwer is made in a very ſolemn manner, in the following words: "It ſhall be for a time, times, and an half. And when he ſhall have accompliſhed to ſcatter the power of the holy people, all theſe things ſhall be finiſhed." He who ſhall ſcatter the power of the holy people or the ſaints, is the ſame with the horn, mentioned in the ſeventh chapter, who ſhould "Wear out the ſaints of the Moſt High;" which is the ſame event which is here expreſſed in different words. And the time of his doing this, is the ſame which is mentioned here: "And they ſhall be given into his hand, until a time, and times, and the dividing of time."* That is, three prophetical years and an half, in which are 1260 prophetical days, which are put for ſo many years. And this is the ſame power which is called a beaſt in the Revelation, who was to do the ſame thing mentioned here, viz. It was given unto him to make war with the ſaints, and to overcome them! And the ſame time is there fixed for his doing this. "And power was given unto him to continue (or practiſe and make war) forty and two months," after he was recovered to life from being wounded unto death;† which is juſt three years and an half, and twelve hundred and ſixty days.

Daniel heard, but did not underſtand the anſwer, and therefore put the following queſtion, "Then ſaid I, O my Lord, what ſhall be the end of theſe things?" The anſwer is, "From the time that the daily ſacrifice ſhall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh deſolate ſet up, there ſhall be a thouſand two hundred and ninety days. Bleſſed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thouſand three hundred and five and thirty days." Here are two different numbers or times mentioned, and neither of them agrees exactly with the foregoing anſwer. In that, the time of the continuance of the perſecuting power, which ſhall ſcatter and wear out the ſaints, is limited to 1260 years. In the anſwer to Daniel's

* Chap. vii. 25. † Rev. xiii. 3, 5, 7.

Daniel's queſtion, two different numbers of years are mentioned, when thoſe evil things ſhall come to an end, and the prophanation of the church, and the worſhip and ordinances of Chriſt, ſhall ceaſe, and the church ſhall be reſtored to due order, and be bleſſed and brought to a happy, glorious ſtate, viz. 1290, and 1335 years. The firſt is 30 years longer than the time mentioned above, and in the Revelation, and the laſt exceeds it 75 years. This ſeeming difference may be reconciled by obſerving, that theſe anſwers do not reſpect preciſely the ſame event. The former expreſſes the time of the continuance and reign of antichriſt, in which he ſhall oppreſs the church of Chriſt: And when he ſhall have accompliſhed to ſcatter the power of the holy people, he ſhall be deſtroyed. The latter looks forward to the recovery of the church of Chriſt, from her low, afflicted, broken ſtate, to a ſtate of peace and proſperity, in the proper uſe and enjoyment of the worſhip, inſtitutions and ordinances of Chriſt, which had been ſo greatly corrupted by the falſe church of Rome. It may take ſome time to effect this, after the Pope and the church of Rome are wholly deſtroyed and extinct. As the corruption and perverſion of the church, worſhip and ordinances of Chriſt, was brought on by degrees, and conſiderable advances were made in this, after antichriſt aroſe, and the Pope became a perſecuting beaſt; ſo doubtleſs the church will not be wholly purified when this beaſt ſhall be deſtroyed; but it will be ſome time after this, before all corruptions and errors in doctrine and practice, will be wholly extirpated, and the church appear in her true beauty, and come to a ſtate of univerſal, eſtabliſhed peace and proſperity. Within thirty years after the beaſt ſhall be ſlain, and his body deſtroyed and given to the burning flame, or at the end of 1290 years, the church may become univerſal, and all nations be members of it; and it may arrive to a ſtate of great purity and peace, and an end be put to all her troubles, and moſt of the wicked be ſwept off from the face of the earth, by ſome remarkable event, and ſudden ſtroke; by which the kingdom of ſatan ſhall be nearly extinct; and his influence among mankind almoſt wholly ceaſe. But the church of Chriſt may not arrive to the moſt pure and happy ſtate which it ſhall enjoy, under forty or fifty years after this. For this happy period chriſtians muſt wait; and they will be in a peculiar and high degree bleſſed, who ſhall come to this happy and glorious ſtate of the church, when the firſt reſurrection ſhall be univerſal and complete, and the Millennium

ſtate

ſtate eſtabliſhed, and brought to its full ſtature, and proper height in holineſs and happineſs, which took place in a conſiderable degree, and might properly be ſaid to have began a number of years before. But theſe events, and the preciſe time and manner of their taking place, will be fully known, and the prophecies by which they are foretold, will be better underſtood, when they ſhall be actually accompliſhed; and all the miſtakes which are now made reſpecting them, will be rectified; until which time, they muſt be in ſome meaſure ſealed. Nevertheleſs, it may be evident from divine revelation, that the end of the reign of antichriſt draws near, and the time of deliverance of the church, from the dark and low ſtate in which it has been near twelve hundred years, and of the ruin of the kingdom of ſatan in the world, is not far off; and that theſe great events will come on within two hundred years, or about that time; and that the ſeventh thouſand years of the world, is the time fixed for the proſperity of the church of Chriſt, and the reign of the ſaints on earth. And it is hoped that what has been now obſerved on this point, is ſufficient to convince every unprejudiced, attentive inquirer, that there is ſatisfactory evidence from prophecy, and other things contained in ſcripture, that the predicted Millennium will take place at that time.

It has been obſerved, that as antichriſt roſe gradually, from one degree of influence and power to another, till he became a complete beaſt, ſo this perſecuting, idolatrous, antichriſtian power will fall by degrees, until it is wholly taken out of the way: And there may, and probably will be, 1260 years between the moſt remarkable ſteps by which he roſe, and as great and remarkable ſteps, by which he is to fall, and go into perdition.*

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* The time of the captivity of the Jews by the Babylonians, was fixed in the prophecy of Jeremiah to ſeventy years. But this prediction had reference to different beginnings and endings. It was juſt ſeventy years from the firſt captivity, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, when Daniel and many other Jews were carried to Babylon, to the decree of Cyrus, giving leave to the Jews to return, and ordering that the temple and Jeruſalem ſhould be rebuilt. And it was ſeventy years from the deſtruction of Jeruſalem and the temple, to the publiſhing of the decree of Darius, by which the building of the temple was completed, and the Jews reſtored to their former ſtate.

So, the 1260 years of the captivity of the church of Chriſt, in ſpiritual Babylon, will doubtleſs have different beginnings, and conſequently different endings. As the power and tyranny of the Biſhop and church of Rome

roſe

The corruption and apoſtacy of the church had early beginnings, and the uſurped, tyrannical, and worldly power of the Biſhops, eſpecially of the Biſhop of Rome, ſoon began to take place. The Apoſtle Paul, ſpeaking of the grand apoſtacy which has actually taken place in the church of Rome, under the influence and power of the *man of ſin*, that is, the Pope, ſays, that the ſeeds of all this were then ſown, and this myſtery of iniquity did then begin to work with power and energy, ἐνεργεῖται which was to be kept under powerful reſtraints for a while, but ſhould openly appear and be acted out when theſe reſtraints ſhould be taken off.* In the third century, "The Biſhops aſſumed, in many places, a princely authority, particularly thoſe who had the greateſt number of churches under their inſpection, and who preſided over the moſt oppulent aſſemblies. They appropriated to their evangelical function, the ſplendid enſigns of temporal majeſty: A throne ſurrounded with miniſters, exalted above his equals the ſervants of the meek and humble Jeſus, and ſumptuous garments dazzled the eyes and the minds of the multitude, into an ignorant veneration for their arrogated authority."† And about the middle of that century, STEPHEN, the Biſhop of Rome, a haughty, ambitious man, aſpired to a ſuperiority and power over all the other Biſhops and churches, and his preeminence in the church univerſal, was acknowledged. From this time, to the reformation from popery in the ſixteenth century, when the Pope began to fall in a remarkable degree, and loſt a great part of his power and influence, which he is never like to regain, are 1260 years. Luther, the firſt reformer, aroſe in the year of Chriſt, 1517. If we reckon back from that time, 1260 years will carry us to the year 257, which is the very time in which STEPHEN, Biſhop of Rome, claimed and uſurped the power and preeminence abovementioned, and which was, in ſome meaſure at leaſt, granted to him.

And as this man of ſin, roſe higher and higher, and became more conſpicuous by one remarkable ſtep after another, in the fourth, fifth, ſixth and ſeventh centuries, until he was publicly inveſted with temporal dominion, about the middle of the eighth century,

roſe from leſs beginnings to their full height; ſo the fall is to be gradual, till it is completed: And from each remarkable advance, there are 1260 years, to as remarkable, ſucceſſive events, by which the kingdom and the power of the beaſt ſhall decline, and be utterly deſtroyed.

* 2 Theſſ. ii. 3—8.

† Moſheim's Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory: Third Century, Chap. II.

century, viz. in the year 756, when he became a complete beaſt, and aſſumed the greateſt authority, both in civil and religious matters, in the chriſtian world, and in fact had more power and influence over all perſons and things in the church and ſtate, than any other man; ſo there is good reaſon to conclude, he will gradually fall, by one remarkable event after another, from the time of the reformation in the ſixteenth century, when his power and influence in the chriſtian world were ſo greatly eclipſed, until this ſon of perdition ſhall be utterly deſtroyed, not far from the end of the twentieth century, or the beginning of the ſeventh thouſand years of the world. And with the fall of this ſon of ſatan, the kingdom of ſatan, which has been ſo great and ſtrong in this world for ſo long a time, will come to an end; and he will be caſt out of the earth, and chained down in the bottomleſs pit: Which event will be ſucceeded by the kingdom of heaven, which ſhall comprehend all the men then on earth, in which the ſaints ſhall reign a thouſand years.

The facts and events which have taken place ſince that time, eſpecially in the preſent century, coincide with ſuch a concluſion, and ſerve to ſtrengthen and confirm it. The Pope and the hierarchy of the church of Rome, are ſinking with a rapid deſcent.—The kings and nations who once wandered after this beaſt, and joined to ſupport and exalt this antichriſtian power, now pay little regard to him. They neither love nor fear him much, but are rather diſpoſed to pull him down and ſtrip him of his riches and power. The diſſolution of the ſociety of the Jeſuits, baniſhing them, and confiſcating their riches, who were a great ſupport of that church and the Pope; the kings taking from the Pope the power which he claimed, as his right, to nominate and appoint all the biſhops to vacant ſees, and actually taking it upon themſelves to do this, by which a vaſt ſtream of money which uſed to be poured into the coffers of the Pope, is taken from him, and falls into the hands of theſe kings:—The increaſe and ſpread of light, by which the tyranny, ſuperſtition and idolatry of the church of Rome and its hierarchy are more clearly diſcerned, and expoſed to the abhorence and contempt of men; and eſpecially the great increaſe of the knowledge of the nature, reaſonableneſs and importance of religious and civil liberty, and the rapid ſpread of zeal among the nations to promote theſe: All theſe are remarkable events, which, among others not mentioned, ſerve to

confirm the above concluſion, that the Pope is falling with increaſing rapidity. And there is reaſon to expect from what has come to paſs, and is now taking place, and from ſcripture prophecy, that yet greater and more remarkable events will ſoon take place, and come on in a ſwift and ſurpriſing ſucceſſion, which will haſten on the utter overthrow of the beaſt and all his adherents: And that the time predicted will ſoon come, when the ten horns, or kings, who have agreed in time paſt, and given their kingdom unto the beaſt, ſhall change their minds, and hate the whore, and make her deſolate, and naked, and ſhall eat her fleſh, and burn her with fire.*

* Rev. xvii. 16, 17.

SECTION IV.

In which is conſidered, what events are to take place, according to Scripture Prophecy, before the beginning of the Millennium, and to prepare the way for it.

BY attending to the events predicted, which are to take place before the Millennium, and which are to introduce it, farther evidence will come into view, that it will not commence long before the beginning of the ſeventh thouſand years of the world; nor much latter; and therefore, that it will be in that thouſand years, and begin about two hundred years from the end of this preſent century.

The ſeven vials or cups, which contained the ſeven laſt plagues, or remarkable judgments, which are to be executed upon the beaſt and his adherents, and upon the world of mankind, are to be poured out during the time of the reign of the beaſt, and the exiſtence of the falſe church of Rome; and which will iſſue in the deſtruction of the beaſt, and of that church. This is evident from the fifteenth and ſixteenth chapters of the Revelation. The firſt vial reſpects the beaſt and his followers, and brought ſore calamities upon them, expreſſed in the following words: "And

there fell a noiſome and grievous ſore upon the men which had the mark of the beaſt, and upon them who worſhipped his image."* A number of theſe vials muſt have been already poured out, as the beaſt has exiſted above a thouſand years already; and therefore the effects of the laſt vial, which include his utter deſtruction, will not reach much more than two hundred years from this time; and conſequently theſe effects will ſoon begin to take place, if they have not already began in ſome meaſure. For as the pouring out or running, of the ſeven vials, is limited to the 1260 years of the continuance of the beaſt, there are not 200 years for each vial; and ſome may run longer, and others a ſhorter time of this ſpace.

Some acquaintance with the hiſtory of the calamitous events which have taken place, anſwering to the prophetic deſcription under thoſe vials which have been poured out, is neceſſary in order to know how and when it has been fulfilled, and how many vials appear to have already run out, and which is now running.—Mr. Lowman has taken pains to ſhow from many credible hiſtorians, that the remarkable calamitous events which have taken place, and which have eſpecially affected the beaſt and his followers, and brought great and diſtreſſing evils upon them, have anſwered to the evils and events deſcribed in prophetic language, under the ſucceſſive five firſt vials of wrath: And there appears to be ſatisfactory evidence that the judgments predicted under theſe vials, have already been executed on antichriſt, and his ſupporters and followers: And that the reformation began by Luther, and the remarkable events attending it, was the judgment predicted by the pouring out of the fifth vial, to be inflicted on the beaſt and the church of Rome. This vial was to be poured out on the ſeat, or, as it is in the original, the throne of the beaſt—"And his kingdom was full of darkneſs, and they gnawed their tongues for pain."† When the proteſtant reformation came on, proteſtants had light, had diſcerning and wiſdom, proſperity and joy: But the Pope and his followers ſuffered great vexation and anguiſh, every event turned againſt them, their light was turned into darkneſs, their policy and counſels, by which they had proſpered and obtained their ends before, were now turned into fooliſhneſs; and they were baffled and confounded, and their attempts to ſuppreſs the northern hereſy, as they called it, and to cruſh the proteſtants, proved abortive, and turned againſt themſelves, in a remarkable

* Rev. xvi. 2. † Rev. xvi. 10.

manner. And thoſe events proved like a laſting, painful ſore to them, from which they have not recovered to this day. "And they blaſphemed the God of heaven, becauſe of their pains and their ſores, and repented not of their deeds." They blaſphemed God, by attributing what took place in favour of truth and the cauſe of Chriſt, to the exertions and obſtinacy of wicked men, and calling the truths of the goſpel and holineſs, eſpouſed and propagated by the reformers, the deluſions and works of ſatan, and treating the reformation, and the work of God, as if it were the work of the devil. They alſo blaſphemed the God of heaven, by perſiſting in their groſs idolatry, worſhipping ſaints and images, in the face of the light exhibited by the reformers, which idolatry is called blaſphemy in the Bible. And the famous council of Trent, which was called by the Pope at that time, and ſat eighteen years, were ſo far from complying with the reformation, that they anathematized the perſons, doctrines and practices, by which it was introduced and ſupported. And formed decrees in favour of the power and tyranny of the Pope, and the ſuperſtition and idolatry of the church of Rome, and in ſome inſtances went beyond any thing that had ever been decreed by any counſel before, in favour of theſe abominations. Thus "they repented not of their evil deeds."

This vial began to be poured out near the beginning of the ſixteenth century, in the year 1517, when Luther began to oppoſe the wickedneſs of the church of Rome, and the power and evil practices of the Pope: And from that time, the influence and power, or throne, of this man of ſin, has been diminiſhing, and he is in a great meaſure depoſed, and has fallen almoſt to the ground from that high throne, and unlimited power in church and ſtate, to which he had, before that, aſpired and riſen. As it is near three hundred years ſince the fifth vial was poured out, there is good reaſon to conclude, that the ſixth vial began to be poured out, and has been running from the latter end of the laſt century, at leaſt, i. e. for an hundred years or more; that it is near run out, and the ſeventh and laſt vial will begin to run early in the next century. Whether this be ſo or not, may be determined with greater and more ſatisfactory evidence, by attending to the prophetic deſcription of the events which are to take place under thoſe vials. And as the ſixth vial is ſuppoſed to be now running, there is reaſon to pay a more particular and careful attention to

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the prophetic language, by which the events under this vial are expreſſed, that the meaning may be underſtood, and applied to the events which are pointed out, ſo as to be clearly diſcovered, and the ſigns of theſe times, be diſcerned by all who will properly attend to this intereſting ſubject.

"And the ſixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates: And the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the eaſt might be prepared." Ancient Babylon was a type of the antichriſtian church of Rome. By that, the church of Iſrael was afflicted and reduced to a ſtate of captivity ſeventy years, until it was taken by Cyrus and Darius, whoſe kingdoms were eaſt of Babylon. So the church of Chriſt has fallen under the power of this antichriſtian church, and power is given to the beaſt to make war with the ſaints, and to overcome them, and to continue forty two months: Therefore, the church of Rome is called Babylon in the Revelation.

The river Euphrates ran through Babylon, under the walls of the city, and a wide and deep moat, filled with water from the river, encompaſſed the city on the outſide of the walls; ſo that the river was not only a defence to the city, but afforded a ſupply of water and fiſh, and other proviſions, brought into it by water carriage. Cyrus, who came againſt Babylon with an army of Medes and Perſians, took the city, by turning the water of the river from the uſual channel, in which it went under the walls of the city, and ran through it, and dried up the water in that channel, by which a way was opened for his army to paſs into the city under the walls, in the dried channel, where the river uſed to run. Accordingly the army marched in, and took the city in the night, when the inhabitants were either aſleep, or intoxicated with drinking, as that was the time of a great feſtival. In that night the king of Babylon was ſlain, and Cyrus took the kingdom for his uncle Darius, the Mede.*

In this prophecy there is an alluſion to this manner of taking Babylon, by Darius and Cyrus, the kings of the eaſt. The church of Rome is the antitype of Babylon. By the kings of the eaſt, are meant thoſe, whoever they may be, who are, or ſhall be enemies to the church of Rome, and wiſh to reduce and deſtroy it, and ſhall be made the inſtruments of it; as the eaſtern kings took Babylon, by drying up the river Euphrates. The riches and power of the Pope

* Dan. v.——See Prideaux's Connexion, Part I. Book II.

Pope and the church of Rome, and whatever ſerves as a defence and ſupport of that church, anſwer to the river Euphrates in old Babylon; and the removal of thoſe is meant by drying up the river; which will prepare the way for the enemies and oppoſers of this church, to take poſſeſſion of it, and deſtroy it.

The river, in this ſenſe of it, has been drying up for a century or more, while this ſixth vial has been running; and there have been more remarkable inſtances of it in this century, ſome of which have been mentioned above, by which the riches of the church of Rome are greatly diminiſhed, and ſhe is ſtripped and becoming poor: And the power and influence of the Pope is become very ſmall and inconſiderable, and he is but little regarded by thoſe who once worſhipped him; and the way is faſt preparing, for the Pope and his church to be hated, made deſolate, and burnt with fire."*

John goes on to relate a farther viſion which he had, of events which are to take place under this vial, in the following words: And I ſaw three unclean ſpirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beaſt, and out of the mouth of the falſe prophet. For they are the ſpirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. And he gathered them together into a place, called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon."† This is the firſt time that the falſe prophet is mentioned: And it appears from what is ſaid of this falſe prophet, in the twentieth verſe of the nineteenth chapter, that he is the ſame with the ſecond beaſt, which is deſcribed in the thirteenth chapter, by which is meant the hierarchy of the church of Rome, or the Pope and his clergy, in their eccleſiaſtical capacity, claiming to have the ſole juriſdiction, and to be infallible dictators in every thing that relates to chriſtian faith and practice. The beaſt, as diſtinguiſhed from the falſe prophet here, is the civil power of the Roman empire, with which the Pope is inveſted, which he has claimed and exerciſed, by which he became a beaſt.

The dragon is the devil, who is repreſented as a powerful, inviſible agent, having a great hand in all the wickedneſs in the world, and has ſet up and animates the beaſt and falſe prophet, making

* See Edward's Humble Attempt, &c. page 153.

† Rev. xvi. 13, 14, 16.

making them inſtruments to anſwer his ends, being the ſpirit who works with all his power and deceptive cunning, in theſe children of diſobedience; and who are his children in a peculiar ſenſe. Theſe ſpirits are therefore, the numerous ſpirits of devils who unite in one deſign, working miracles, or wonders, as the word in the original is ſometimes rendered, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world; that is, to all men who dwell on the earth, great and ſmall, high and low. What is the tendency and effect of theſe inviſible, evil ſpirits, what they deſign and do accompliſh, when thus let looſe, and ſuffered to go forth into all the world, there can be no doubt. They will corrupt the world, and promote all kinds of wickedneſs among men, to the utmoſt of their power and ſkill, and excite mankind to riſe againſt God and the Redeemer, and oppoſe and deſpiſe all divine inſtitutions and commands; and, at the ſame time, to hate and deſtroy each other, and attempt to gratify every hateful luſt of the fleſh and of the mind, without reſtraint.

If any diſtinction is to be made between thoſe evil ſpirits which are united in the ſame deſign, and like frogs pervade all places and aſſault all men, as the frogs did the Egyptians, in their attempts to ſeduce and corrupt them; eſpecially thoſe who live in the chriſtian world; that which comes out of the mouth of the dragon, promotes infidelity, and influences and perſuades men to renounce all religion; eſpecially that which is inculcated in the Bible. The ſpirit which proceeds from the mouth of the beaſt, inſpires men with a worldly ſpirit, by which they are ſtrongly attached to the things and enjoyments of this world, and eagerly purſue them; either by gratifying their fleſhly appetites and luſts, in beaſtly uncleanneſs, and intemperance in eating and drinking, frolick and wantonneſs; or by indulging an avaricious ſpirit, which leads to all kinds of unrighteouſneſs, and oppreſſion of each other, according to their power and opportunity: Or they eagerly purſue the honours of the world, in the gratification of pride and haughtineſs, ſtriving to outſhine others in dreſs and high living, or in diſtinguiſhed poſts of honour. And though ſome perſons under the influence of the ſpirit of the beaſt, are more inclined to ſome one of theſe, and others to another; yet the ſame perſon will often purſue them all, and ſeek to gratify the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life. And all theſe will prevail more and more, under the influence of the ſpirit of the

beaſt;

beaſt; and at the ſame time promote infidelity, and are promoted by that. The ſpirit which comes out of the mouth of the falſe prophet, is a ſpirit of falſe religion and deluſion, by which falſe doctrines and groſs errors in principle and practice, are imbibed and propagated.

Theſe ſpirits of devils unite and are agreed in one deſign, to promote all kind of vice and wickedneſs among men, and to as great a degree as they poſſibly can, leading them to infidelity and impiety, and an endleſs train of groſs errors and deluſions, in matters of religion; and hurrying them on in a greedy purſuit of the enjoyments of this world, in the indulgence of their luſts, and the gratification of their love of their own ſelves, and their pride, in the practice of injuſtice and oppreſſion, living in malice and envy, hating and ſpeaking evil of one another, and engaging in fierce contention, cruel and deſtructive war, and murder. By this the world in general, will be in arms againſt God, and his Son; and they will be gathered and knit together, as one man, in open war with heaven, and all the friends of Chriſt on earth. This is doubtleſs meant by theſe ſpirits of devils, going out into the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. It is not meant, that they ſhall be gathered into one place on this globe, or any where alſe; but that they ſhall be united, with one heart in the ſame cauſe of ſin and ſatan, againſt God, and his revealed truth and ways, in whatever part of the earth they live; and thus take arms, and riſe in open rebellion, provoking the Almighty to battle, and, in a ſenſe, challenging him to do his worſt.—Thus they will be as really gathered to the battle, as an army are gathered together to engage in battle with another army, or to beſiege a city.

"And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." Armageddon is the mountain of Megiddo, at the foot of which the memorable battle was fought between the Canaanites, the enemies of Iſrael—and Barak, and the army under him, when Siſera and his hoſt were defeated and utterly deſtroyed; which was a complete overthrow of the Canaanites, and iſſued in the final deliverance of Iſrael from their yoke and power. This was a type of the total defeat and overthrow of the enemies of Chriſt and his church, which will iſſue in the peace and proſperity of the church in the Millennium ſtate. This is intimated in the concluding words of the ſong of Deborah

and

and Barak, in which this victory and deliverance is celebrated. "So let all thine enemies periſh, O Lord: But let them who love him, be as the ſun when he goeth forth in his might."* There is therefore an alluſion to the type, in this prophecy of the event which was typified by it, viz.—the overthrow of all the combined enemies of Chriſt and his church, in the battle of that great day of God Almighty. It cannot be reaſonably inferred from this prediction, that there will be a deciſive battle between Chriſt and his followers, and their enemies, in any particular place. All that is ſignified by theſe words is, that as Jabin king of Canaan gathered together a great army under Siſera, to fight with the God of Iſrael and his people, at the foot of the mountain of Megiddo; who were there overthrown and deſtroyed in battle, when "they fought from heaven, the ſtars in their courſes fought againſt Siſera:" So by the agency of the ſpirits of devils, under the ſuperintendence and direction of divine providence, the world of mankind in general, and eſpecially thoſe in Chriſtendom, will be ſo corrupted and obſtinately rebellious, in all kinds, and the greateſt degrees of wickedneſs, as to be united, and, in this ſenſe, gathered together, all armed in a ſpiritual war againſt God, his cauſe and people. And their iniquity being full, and they ripe for the battle, God will ariſe as a man of war, and in his providence contend in battle with them, till they be utterly deſtroyed from the face of the earth. Thus "The wicked ſhall periſh, and the enemies of the Lord ſhall be as the fat of lambs, they ſhall conſume: Into ſmoke ſhall they conſume away," and by this, way ſhall be made for the meek to inherit the earth, and delight themſelves in the abundance of peace.†

But this battle is to come on under the next vial, which is the ſeventh and laſt. When mankind ſhall be prepared and gathered together, by the great degree of all kinds of wickedneſs, while God has been waiting upon them, even to long ſuffering, in the uſe of very powerful, and all proper means to reclaim and reform them, he will ariſe to battle, and by doing terrible things in righteouſneſs, will manifeſt and diſplay his awful diſpleaſure with them, for their great wickedneſs, and obſtinacy in rebellion againſt him; and the events will then take place which are predicted under the ſeventh vial.

"And the ſeventh angel poured out his vial into the air: And there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne,

* Judg. v. 31. † Pſal. xxxvii. 11, 20.

throne, saying, IT IS DONE." This vial being poured out into the air, denotes that it should affect and destroy satan's kingdom, and his followers in the world in general, who is the prince of the power of the AIR. And the voice from heaven, saying, *It is done*, is a prediction that the events under this vial, by which the battle before mentioned is to be carried on and completed, will utterly destroy the interest and kingdom of the devil in the world, and finish the awful scene of divine judgments, on the antichristian church, and the wicked world in general. The prophecy then goes on to give a general and summary account of the battle of that great day, from the seventh verse to the end of the chapter, and the great and marvellous effects it will have upon great Babylon, i. e. the church of Rome, and upon the nations of the world in general. There will be the greatest convulsions and revolutions in the political and moral world, that have ever been, attended with awful judgments upon men; which are predicted in prophetic language, "And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found."—"And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: And great Babylon came into remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." The great city, and great Babylon, seem to be one and the same thing, the church of Rome. In the next chapter, this same false church is called "Babylon the great," and "The great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth."* What is meant by this city being divided into three parts will be better known, when the prediction shall be accomplished. It doubtless intends, that which shall break the antichristian church into pieces, and will issue in the ruin of it, the fatal blow being struck. Perhaps it intends a division and opposition among those who have been the members and supporters of that church, by which this spiritual Babylon shall fall, or which shall hasten on the ruin of it; as a kingdom divided against itself, cannot stand, but is brought to desolation. In the prophecy of this kingdom of antichrist by Daniel, in the latter end of it, he says, "The kingdom shall be *divided*; and by this it shall be partly broken.†

"And the cities of the nations fell." Divine judgments, and a peculiar measure of wrath shall fall upon the christian world, in which

* Verses 5, 18. † Dan. ii. 41, 42.

which the antichriſtian kingdom has been ſet up; but the reſt of mankind ſhall ſhare in the calamity of that day, and be puniſhed for their wickedneſs, to which this expreſſion ſeems to have reſpect. The cities of the nations of the world, are their ſtrength, defence and pride: Theſe ſhall be demoliſhed and wholly taken away, that they ſhall no more be able to tyrannize over one another.—The pride and power of Mahometans and heathen nations, ſhall be made to ceaſe by a ſeries of divine judgments. "The day of the Lord of hoſts ſhall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he ſhall be brought low. And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall. And the loftineſs of man ſhall be bowed down, and the haughtineſs of men ſhall be made low, in that day. And I will puniſh the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cauſe the arrogancy of the proud to ceaſe, and will lay low the haughtineſs of the terrible."* The ſame is predicted in the following words: "I have cut off the nations, their towers are deſolate; I have made their ſtreets waſte, that none paſſeth by: *Their cities are deſtroyed*, ſo that there is no man, there is none inhabitant. Therefore wait upon me, ſaith the Lord, until the day that I riſe up to the prey: For my determination is to gather the nations, that I may aſſemble the kingdoms to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger; for the earth ſhall be devoured with the fire of my jealouſy."† Theſe words doubtleſs have reference to the events which were to take place under the ſixth and ſeventh vials, when the nations and kingdoms of the world are to be *gathered*, and God will riſe up to battle, to the prey, and pour upon them his indignation, even all his fierce anger, for their obſtinate continuance in ſin and rebellion againſt him; and all the earth ſhall be devoured with the fire of his jealouſy; and thus the cities of the nations ſhall fall; the nations ſhall be cut off; their towers made deſolate, and their cities deſtroyed.

The prophecy under the ſeventh vial goes on. "And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every ſtone about the weight of a talent: And men blaſphemed God, becauſe of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great." There is reference in thoſe words to the deſtruction of the Canaanites, in the great and terrible battle, when the Lord caſt down great ſtones from heaven upon them, and they died, and there

* Iſai. ii. 12, 15, 17. xiii. 11. † Zeph. iii. 6, 8.

were more that died with hailstones, than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.* And God says to Job, "Hast thou seen the treasures of hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against *the day of battle and war*"† Therefore, when great judgments and awful destruction of men are predicted, they are represented by storms of great hail. "Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail, and a destroying storm, shall cast down to the earth with the hand. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies. The Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of devouring fire, with scattering and tempest and hailstones."‡ "Say unto them who daub with untempered mortar, that it shall fall: There shall be an overflowing shower, and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall, and a stormy wind shall rent it. I will even rent it with a stormy wind in my fury: And there shall be an overflowing shower in mine anger, and great hailstones in my fury to consume it. And I will plead against him with pestilence, and with blood, and I will rain upon him, and his bands, and upon many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone."§ All these passages‖ will doubtless have their ultimate and most complete fulfilment, under the seventh vial, and in the same sore calamities and judgments which are predicted in the words under consideration, by the great hail which fell on men out of heaven. The hailstones are represented as weighing an hundred pounds, which is the weight of a talent, to denote the greatness of the judgments and destruction predicted, the sore and awful distresses which shall come on men: "For the plague thereof was exceeding great." These judgments will not reform the obstinate enemies of God, on whom they

* Josh. x. 11. † Job xxxviii. 22, 23.

‡ Isai. xxviii. 2, 17. xxx. 30. § Ezek. xiii. 11, 13. xxxviii. 22.

‖ Unless that in Ezekiel be an exception, which is a description of the punishment of Gog and Magog, by which name the multitude of wicked men are called, who shall rise up when the Millennium is ended, and will be destroyed when Christ shall come to judgment. These words may have their *ultimate* accomplishment then. But as the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel represent the wicked world which shall be destroyed before the Millennium begins, as well as those who shall rise up when it will end; this passage has a primary, if not an ultimate reference to the destruction of the former.

they ſhall fall; they will be exaſperated and blaſpheme God the more, until they are utterly deſtroyed, and ſwept off from the earth; agreeably to the prophecy which may be conſidered as refering ultimately to this dreadful ſcene. "And they ſhall paſs through it, hardly beſtead and hungry: And it ſhall come to paſs, that when they ſhall be hungry, they ſhall fret themſelves, and curſe their king and their God, and look upward. And they ſhall look unto the earth; and behold, trouble and darkneſs, dimneſs of anguiſh; and they ſhall be driven into darkneſs."*

This battle is more particularly deſcribed in the nineteenth chapter, from the beginning of the eleventh verſe, to the end of the chapter. "And I ſaw heaven opened, and beheld, a white horſe; and he who ſat upon him was called faithful and true, and in righteouſneſs doth he judge and make war." This perſon is farther deſcribed, by which he appears to be the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. "And the armies which were in heaven, followed him upon white horſes, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." This does not mean, that the inhabitants of heaven, or the ſaints on earth, will join in a viſible army, and perſonally fight with the enemies of Chriſt and his church, and deſtroy them: But only that theſe ſhall join with Chriſt and be on his ſide, when he ſhall ariſe in his providence, and by his power deſtroy his and their enemies. In this ſenſe, all heaven will be with him, when he ſhall come forth to battle in his providence, and execute his wrath upon men, in awful ſucceſſive judgments, in which the angels may be uſed as inviſible inſtruments of his vengeance: And he will do all this, in anſwer to the prayers of his church on earth, and in their cauſe, to vindicate and deliver them, and prepare the way for the proſperity of his church on earth. That he will be the great inviſible agent in this battle, appears from the following words: And out of his mouth goeth a ſharp ſword, that with it he ſhould ſmite the nations: And he ſhall rule them with a rod of iron: And he treadeth the wine preſs of the fierceneſs and wrath of Almighty God." This is the battle of that great day of God Almighty. This awful ſcene proceeds and is yet farther deſcribed: "And I ſaw an angel ſtanding in the ſun; and he cried with a loud voice, ſaying to all the fowls that fly in the midſt of heaven, Come and gather yourſelves together unto the ſupper of the great God; that ye may eat the fleſh of kings, and the fleſh

* Iſaiah viii. 21, 22.

flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both small and great." This is a strong, figurative, prophetic expression of the great slaughter and terrible destruction of mankind, when God Almighty shall come forth to battle, and manifest his hot displeasure and terrible wrath, in the judgment he will inflict on them. The representation of this battle, and the issue of it goes on, and "I John saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies *gathered together*, to make war against him who sat on the horse, and against his army." These are the same who are mentioned, chap. xvi. 14, 16, as *gathered together* to the battle of that great day of God Almighty, the meaning of which has been explained. And in this war and battle, the beast and the false prophet were taken and destroyed, with their adherents. "And the remnant were slain with the sword of him who sat upon the horse, which sword proceedeth out of his mouth, and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." By *the remnant*, are meant the rest of mankind, who by their sins make war with Christ, and are not included in the beast and false prophet, and their followers, who belong to the kingdom of antichrist. Their being slain by the sword which proceeded out of the mouth of Christ, does not mean their conversion, but their falling victims to his vengeance, which is expressed by the fowls being filled with their flesh.

The same battle and slaughter of men, is represented and predicted in figurative prophetic language, in the fourteenth chapter, where John describes a vision which he had of one like unto the Son of man, who sat upon a white cloud, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And it was said unto him, "Thrust in thy sickle and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he thrust in his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle." And it was said unto him, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine press of the wrath of God. And the wine press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine press, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."

Upon

Upon this vision it is to be observed, that by the harvest of the earth, and the clusters of the vine of the earth, are meant the inhabitants of the earth, or mankind in general. And reaping the harvest, and gathering the clusters of the vine of the earth, signifies the slaughter and destruction of the inhabitants of the earth; not every one of them indeed; for in the harvest and vintage, some ears of corn are commonly left standing, which escape the sickle, and a few scattering grapes are left on the vine when the clusters in general are gathered: And that this slaughter and desolation, which shall be made of the inhabitants of the world, will take place in consequence of their apostacy, and obstinate continuance and increase in sin, until they are become ripe, fully ripe, for this dreadful execution and destruction, by divine vengeance: Therefore, that this reaping, and the harvest, and gathering the clusters of the vine of the earth, will not be a merciful dispensation towards the inhabitants then in the world; but the execution of divine vengeance, and an awful exercise and display of the displeasure and wrath of God, in the evils which shall fall on men, for their perseverance and increase in wickedness. This is represented and expressed in a striking manner, by the figure of casting the vintage into the great wine press of the wrath of God, and the large and amazing quantity of blood which proceeded from thence; signifying the great and general slaughter, and terrible sufferings of mankind, when this time of his wrath shall come.

From this view of the events predicted under the sixth and seventh vials, it appears, that while the sixth vial is running, the way will be preparing for the overthrow of spiritual Babylon.

One event will take place after another, which will greatly weaken and remove the power and influence of the Pope, among the nations in Christendom, by taking away his riches, by drying up the stream of wealth, and the removal of other things, by which the church of Rome has been made strong, and stood as impregnable for many ages. But this will not be attended by any general reformation of professing christians, or revival and great increase of the true church of Christ; nor will the moral state of the christian world, or of mankind in general, be reformed and grow better, but the contrary. By the evil influence which the beast and the hierarchy of the church of Rome, has had in the world, and by the power and agency of satan, the unrestrained lusts of men will hurry them on to all kinds of wickedness; so that it will rise to a

greater

greater degree, and be more univerſal than ever before. Infidelity, deiſm, and atheiſm, and the moſt open and groſs impiety and profanation of every thing ſacred, will prevail and abound. And falſe religion, and the groſſeſt errors and deluſions of all kinds, will take place and ſpread among thoſe who do not diſcard all religion. And a worldly ſpirit will be very ſtrong and prevalent, among old and young, urging them on to the gratification of their ſenſual inclinations and luſts, in all kinds of intemperance and lewdneſs; and prompting them to acts of unrighteouſneſs, oppreſſion and cruelty; which will promote mutual hatred, bitterneſs and contention, and ſpread confuſion, and every evil work, in fierce and cruel wars, and horrid murders. It is certain, that the unclean ſpirits, like frogs, thoſe ſpirits of devils, when they go forth to the whole world, will promote all kinds of diſorder and wickedneſs to the greateſt degree, and ſet mankind againſt God, and all his revealed truth, and againſt each other, and every thing good and excellent; and make this world as much an image of hell as they poſſibly can; by which the inhabitants on earth, in general, will be united and gathered together in arms againſt heaven, and become wholly ripe for deſtruction from the Almighty, for the battle of that great day, which will come on under the ſeventh vial, and will be conducted, fought and finiſhed by Chriſt himſelf, againſt an ungodly world.

The prevailing, unreſtrained wickedneſs of men, which has been now mentioned, by which they ſhall be gathered unto this battle, is deſcribed by the Apoſtle Paul, in the following words: "This know alſo, that in the laſt days, perilous times ſhall come. For men ſhall be lovers of their ownſelves, covetous, boaſters, proud, blaſphemers, diſobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, covenant breakers, falſe accuſers, incontinent, fierce, deſpiſers of thoſe who are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleaſures more than lovers of God; having a form of godlineſs, but denying the power thereof."* All theſe evil characters have been in every age of the world; but they will then, in theſe *laſt days*, take place to a greater degree, and more univerſally, than ever before.

The true church of Chriſt will ſubſiſt and continue in this evil time of the prevalence of the powers of darkneſs; but the number of real chriſtians will be ſmall; and many, even of them, if not the

* 2 Tim. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

the moſt, will probably be weak and low in their chriſtian exerciſes, by the influences and uncommon power of thoſe evil ſpirits, and in too great a degree conformed to this world. They will be hated, oppoſed, and trodden down, by the wicked, and be in an afflicted, ſuffering ſtate in this dark and evil day. They will be in a great meaſure hidden and unknown, and the cauſe of Chriſt and of truth will be reproached, and appear to be almoſt loſt; and the true followers of Chriſt, his ſheep, will be ſcattered into corners in this cloudy and dark day.* Whether wicked men, and enemies to the true ſervants of Chriſt, will perſecute them unto death, and renew this horrid work, of which ſo much has been done in former ages, in this time when iniquity will abound to ſuch a great degree, cannot be now determined, by any thing ſaid in ſcripture reſpecting it. It is thought by moſt, that ſince the Pope is brought ſo low, and his power and influence is ſtill ſinking ſo faſt; and ſo much light is ſpreading in favour of civil and religious liberty, ſhowing the reaſonableneſs and importance of it, and the unreaſonableneſs and folly of a perſecuting ſpirit; and liberal ſentiments reſpecting religion are propagated and increaſing, perſecution on account of religious ſentiments or practice, is near come to an end, and never will be revived and practiſed again.—This may appear moſt probable: But though the antichriſtian church ſhould never perſecute the faithful followers of Chriſt again, and a perſecuting ſpirit ſhould wholly ceaſe among profeſſing chriſtians of all denominations; yet infidels, who condemn all religious perſecution, in every degree and form, in which it has been practiſed, and boaſt of their liberal ſentiments and ſpirit, with reſpect to this; and uſe it as a ſtrong and concluſive argument againſt chriſtianity itſelf, that profeſſed chriſtians have, in ſo many inſtances, perſecuted others; even *theſe infidels*, or their ſucceſſors, may find true chriſtians, their doctrines and practices, to be ſo diſagreeable and hateful to them, and, in their view, ſo hurtful to ſociety, and ſo contrary to all that, in which they place their own happineſs, and that of mankind, that having all reſtraints taken off, and the power being put into their hands, they may think theſe men ought not to be ſuffered to live; and that it is for the good of ſociety to have them extirpated, and put to death, unleſs they can be brought to renounce their ſentiments and practices, by perſuaſion or puniſhments; and ſo become as determined,

* Ezek. xxxiv. 12.

cruel perſecutors of chriſtians, as any have been in paſt ages.—If this ſhould take place, it will make a new, and perhaps greater and more ſtriking diſcovery of the wickedneſs of the human heart, eſpecially of the hearts and real character of this ſort of men, than ever has been exhibited before. And they who now know what is in man, from the character given of him in ſcripture, and by the diſcovery mankind have made of their hearts, by words and deeds, and from a true acquaintance with their own hearts, muſt be ſenſible that nothing can prevent even men of this caſt preſecuting chriſtians, but reſtraints from heaven. But, however, perhaps this diſcovery of what is in man, is reſerved to be made after the Millennium ſhall be over, in the riſe of Gog and Magog, when it may be exhibited, in many reſpects, to greater advantage, and ſo as to anſwer more important ends.

Though the true church of Chriſt muſt be in a low, dark ſtate, in many reſpects, under this vial, yet there will doubtleſs be revivals of religion, and an increaſe of converts to real chriſtianity, in many different places, and truth may be getting advantage, and more clearly diſtinguiſhed from error, by thoſe who have eyes to ſee; and chriſtianity be more and more refined in doctrines and practice, from the various errors and corruptions, which have been introduced among the true followers of Chriſt; and every thing, and all events, will ſerve to bring on and introduce the Millennium, in the beſt manner, and in the moſt proper time.

The battle of that great day of God Almighty, is to come on under the ſeventh vial, as has been obſerved. When the iniquity of the world of mankind ſhall be full, and they ſhall be united in open rebellion, and, in this ſenſe, gathered together, and armed againſt heaven: And after God has waited long upon them in the uſe of all proper means to reclaim them, eſpecially the chriſtian world; and they are become fully ripe for deſtruction, he will come forth to battle againſt them, and execute moſt fearful judgments upon them, and deſtroy them in a manner and degree, which ſhall manifeſt his awful diſpleaſure with them, for their obſtinacy in all kinds of wickedneſs. When theſe briars and thorns are ſet againſt God in battle, he will go through them and burn them together.* The deſtruction of the world of mankind by a flood, when the wickedneſs of man was become great, and the earth was filled with violence; and they continued obſtinate in

* See Iſai. xxvii. 4.

in diſobedience, while the long ſuffering of God waited upon them in the days of Noah, was an emblem of this battle: As alſo was the deſtruction of the inhabitants of Canaan, when their iniquity was full, which prepared the way for the people of God to take poſſeſſion of that land. So God puniſhed the nation of the Jews, by deſtroying them, and laying waſte Jeruſalem, and the temple. When they had filled up the meaſure of their ſins, wrath came upon them to the uttermoſt. This was a figure or type of this greater, more dreadful and general battle, under the ſeventh vial, when "The Lord ſhall come out of his place to puniſh the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth ſhall diſcloſe her blood, and ſhall no more cover her ſlain."*

This battle, it has been obſerved, will not conſiſt in the church or chriſtians raiſing armies, and fighting and carrying on war with the antichriſtian party, or with the wicked world; or in a conflict between the former and the latter, reſpecting the truths and cauſe of Chriſt: But it will be commenced and carried on by Chriſt, while inviſible in heaven, inveſted with all divine power in heaven and earth, in the exerciſe of his providence, bringing judgments upon his enemies, and a wicked world, in ſuch remarkable ways and manner, as to be a clear and remarkable manifeſtation of his preſence and power; of his diſpleaſure with a wicked world, for oppoſing him, his church and the goſpel; and an inconteſtible evidence of the truth of chriſtianity, by fulfilling his predictions and promiſes, taking vengeance on the enemies of his people, and effectually ſupporting them, and their cauſe. He will doubtleſs make uſe of inſtruments in this battle.

The holy angels may be made the inſtruments of many events which ſhall be full of evil to wicked men. And the true church of Chriſt, his witneſſes in his cauſe, and againſt the deluſions and wickedneſs of the antichriſtian church, and of the world, are repreſented as having a hand in bringing upon their enemies all the evils which will come upon them; becauſe they will take place in anſwer to their prayers, in their cauſe, and in order effectually to avenge his own elect of their adverſaries.† Therefore, it is ſaid of them, "Theſe have power to ſhut heaven, that it rain not, in the days of their prophecy: And have power over waters, to turn them into blood, and to ſmite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will."‡ And the wicked themſelves will be inſtruments

* Iſai. xxvi. 21. † Luke xviii. 7. ‡ Rev. xi. 6.

ments of afflicting and deſtroying each other, in a very cruel and dreadful manner, by oppoſing and fighting with one another, and carrying on deſtructive and bloody wars, killing men by thouſands, and laying waſte whole countries and nations; by which the earth will be in a great degree depopulated; and rivers of blood will be ſhed by the unreſtrained pride and cruel rage of man. And many will probably put an end to their own lives, and inſtances of ſuicide will be greatly multiplied.

But multitudes of mankind will be deſtroyed by the more immediate hand of God, by famine and peſtilences, which will prevail in many countries, at different times, in an extraordinary manner, and to a degree never known before; by which vaſt multitudes will periſh ſuddenly, and in circumſtances very ſurpriſing and awful. And there will be earthquakes, and terrible ſtorms of lightning and thunder, and inundations of water, by which many cities and places ſhall ſink and be overflowed, with all the inhabitants; and multitudes will periſh by theſe, and innumerable other evil occurrents, which will take place in an unuſual manner, and in quick ſucceſſion; ſo that the hand of God will be viſibly ſtretched out againſt the inhabitants of the world, to puniſh and deſtroy them for their wickedneſs; and the following prediction will be fulfilled, in the full and awful extent of it. "Fear, and the pit, and the ſnare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. And it ſhall come to paſs, that he who fleeth from the noiſe of the fear, ſhall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midſt of the pit, ſhall be taken in the ſnare: For the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do ſhake. The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean diſſolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth ſhall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and ſhall be removed like a cottage, and the tranſgreſſion thereof ſhall be heavy upon it, and it ſhall fall, and not riſe again."*

This battle will not be fought at once, ſo as to be ſoon finiſhed; but will be carried on through a courſe of years, probably for more than a century and an half, in order to make a ſuitable and ſufficiently clear diſplay of the diſpleaſure of God with a wicked world; and to give opportunity to men to repent and reform, when they are warned, called upon, and urged to it, by being made to ſuffer ſuch a variety and long continued ſeries of calamities, for their ſins; and

* Iſai. xxiv. 17, 18, 19, 20.

and to diſcover, and ſet in the moſt clear and ſtriking light, the hardneſs, obſtinacy and wickedneſs of the heart of man, while they continue diſobedient and inflexible, under all theſe terrible diſpenſations of providence, ſuited to awaken and reform them, to teach them the evil of ſin, and the awful diſpleaſure of God with them; and to warn them to fly from the wrath to come, and unto Chriſt, as the only refuge; and go on to revolt yet more and more, and blaſpheme the hand which inflicts theſe evils. By all this will be more clearly manifeſted, than ever before, how totally loſt and infinitely miſerable mankind are, and their infinite need of a Redeemer; that no means that can be uſed, or methods taken to reclaim and ſave them, will be in the leaſt degree effectual, unleſs the Spirit of God be given to change and renew their hearts, and therefore, that the ſalvation of men depends wholly on the mere ſovereign grace of God, even all that good, holineſs and ſalvation, which ſhall take place in the Millennium; and it will, in this reſpect, prepare the way for that day of grace.

This battle and terrible ſlaughter and deſtruction of men in ſo many ways, and for ſo long a courſe of years, will greatly leſſen the number of mankind in the world; ſo that in the cloſe of this terrible ſcene, comparatively few will be left alive. Thoſe will be the chriſtians who ſhall be then members of the churches, and deſcendents from good people who have lived in former ages, and others who will then be true penitents, who will look back on the terrible ſcene which had taken place in the battle of the great day of God Almighty, and ſee, and have a clear and affecting conviction of his diſpleaſure with mankind, for their ſins and the terribleneſs of his wrath; and will acknowledge the righteouſneſs of it. They will conſequently ſee the guilty, miſerable, and utterly loſt ſtate of man, and their need of a Redeemer, to make atonement for their ſins, and the neceſſity of the Holy Spirit to renew their hearts, and form them to right, and truly chriſtian exerciſes: And will be clearly convinced of the truth of all the great and important doctrines of the goſpel, and cordially embrace them. And they will repent and humble themſelves in the ſight of the Lord, and earneſtly, with united hearts, cry to heaven for the forgiveneſs of their ſins, and for mercy on themſelves, and on their children, acknowledging their infinite ill deſert, and flying to Chriſt, and ſovereign grace through him, as their only refuge and hope. And then the ſcene will change. The battle will be over, divine

judgments

judgments will ceaſe, and there will be no more frowns on man, in the providence of God; but all diſpenſations and events will be expreſſions of kindneſs and mercy; and the Holy Spirit will be poured out on them and their offspring, and all ſhall be holineſs to the Lord; and the Millennium will begin, and men will multiply and ſoon ſubdue the earth, and fill it with inhabitants.

As antichriſt and the church of Rome, will have a large ſhare in the cup of indignation and wrath which will be poured out; ſo all the chriſtian world will have a diſtinguiſhed portion of it, as the inhabitants of it are much more guilty than others. There is no reaſon to conſider the antichriſtian ſpirit and practices to be confined to that which is now called the church of Rome: The proteſtant churches have much of antichriſt in them, and are far from being wholly reformed from the corruptions and wickedneſs, in doctrine and practice, which are found in that which is called BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. Her influence in promoting deluſion and wickedneſs extends, in ſome degree, to all the inhabitants of the world, and more eſpecially the chriſtian world. She is the *Mother* of all the falſe doctrines, ſuperſtition, infidelity, and abominable practices in the proteſtant world. And where can the church be found, which is thoroughly purged from all theſe abominations? Some churches may be more pure, and may have proceeded farther in a reformation than others; but none are wholly clear of an antichriſtian ſpirit, and the fruits of it. There may be, and in many inſtances doubtleſs there is, much of the exerciſe of the ſpirit of antichriſt, in oppoſing what is called antichriſt, and the church of Rome; and by running into as great extremes another way. The Apoſtle Paul ſaid, this myſtery of iniquity, the man of ſin, which is antichriſt, began already to work in the churches even in his day.* How much of this then, may it be reaſonably thought, is to be found in moſt, if not all the churches now? In this view, the ſpirit and operation of antichriſt are very extenſive. And how few churches, or individual chriſtians, have ſo far come out from this mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth, as not to be in any degree partakers of her ſins, ſo as not to receive of her plagues? And while the fixth vial continues to run, it is not to be expected that the proteſtant churches in general will grow more pure; but the evil ſpirits which are gone forth,

will

* 2 Theſſ. ii. 7.

will promote and ſpread ſtill greater corruption in doctrine and practice, by which they will be more ripe for divine judgments, and prepared to ſuffer in the battle under the ſeventh vial. The pureſt churches, and real chriſtians, will ſuffer much in this battle, and few will go wholly unpuniſhed. By this the rebels, or falſe hearted profeſſing chriſtians, will be purged out from among real chriſtians, and theſe ſhall be purified and made white, and tried; but the wicked ſhall do wickedly.*

The Jews have ſuffered greatly for their peculiarly aggravated wickedneſs, in rejecting and crucifying the Son of God; and they are now, and have been for near two thouſand years, in a ſtate of great affliction, and under the manifeſt diſpleaſure of heaven, to a great and diſtinguiſhed degree. They yet continue a people, diſtinguiſhed from all other nations, though ſcatterrd all over the world, as outcaſts and vagabonds; and will continue thus a diſtinct people down to the Millennium. But though they have ſuffered ſo much, they yet continue as obſtinate as ever in rejecting Chriſt, and in all their ſins. And there is reaſon to think they will not eſcape the battle of the great day of Almighty God; but great and new calamities will fall upon them, by which they may be much diminiſhed, ſo as to be left few in number, compared with what they have been, or are now. And the threatning denounced againſt that people by Moſes, will then be executed on them, in the full meaning and extent of it: "And ye ſhall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the ſtars of heaven for multitude: Becauſe thou wouldeſt not obey the voice of the Lord thy God."† But God will not make a full end of them, which he probably will do of ſome, if not of many other nations.

The revolutions which will take place in this battle, will open the way for their return to the land given to their anceſtors; and they which are left will repent and return to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, againſt whom, they and their fathers have ſinned, and unto their own land, and will become an eminently excellent part of the chriſtian church, who ſhall multiply, and fill all that vaſt tract of land given to Abraham and his poſterity, from the river of Egypt, to the great river Euphrates,‡ which has never yet been fully poſſeſſed by them. And their being thus received into the church of Chriſt, will be as life from the dead to them, and to the Gentiles.

But

* Dan. xii. 10. † Deut. xxviii. 62. ‡ Gen. xv. 18.

But whether they will continue a diſtinct people from all other chriſtians, through the whole time of the Millennium, or be ſo intermixed with others, as not to be diſtinguiſhed from them, will be determined by the event: But the latter is moſt probable, as the ends of their being preſerved in ſuch a ſtate of diſtinction, will then be anſwered; and thoſe circumſtances and things, which have been, and ſtill are, the means of their continuing a diſtinct and ſeparate people, will then ceaſe; ſuch as circumciſion, and their obſervance of other Moſaic rites. When they ſhall become chriſtians, their name by which they are now diſtinguiſhed will be loſt, and they will be abſorbed in the chriſtian church, the true Iſrael of God, where there is neither Jew nor Greek, but all are one in Chriſt: And then there will be one fold, and one ſhepherd. And then, by this event, the following prediction will be fully accompliſhed: "And ye ſhall leave your name for a curſe unto my choſen! For the Lord God ſhall ſlay thee, and call his ſervants by another name."*

THAT the above repreſentation of this battle, which will be previous to the Millennium, and will introduce it, taken from the paſſages in the Revelation which have been conſidered, is juſt, and agreeable to the true ſenſe of them, farther appears, and is confirmed by other parts of holy ſcripture, eſpecially by the prophecies of this ſame event, recorded in the Old Teſtament.

The deſtruction of the world of mankind by a flood, and the preſervation of Noah and his family, who were by this brought into a new world, to be repleniſhed by them, may be conſidered as a typical and prophetic repreſentation of the great battle with the wicked world, previous to the Millennium; by which the wicked will be ſwept off the earth, and the true church of Chriſt will be delivered and preſerved, and the way opened for its proſperity, and filling the earth.

The ſeries of judgments brought upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians, for their diſobedience to JEHOVAH, and oppreſſions of his people, and their dreadful overthrow in the Red Sea, to prepare the way for the deliverance of Iſrael, was alſo a prophetic type of this great battle. So was the deſtruction of the inhabitants of Canaan, in order to introduce the people of Iſrael, and put them in poſſeſſion of that land. Therefore, reference is had to this in the repreſentation of the battle of that great day, as has been obſerved.

David

* Iſai. lxv. 15.

David was a man of blood, carried on great wars and deſtroyed much people, and many nations, who were enemies to him, and the people of God; and by his conqueſts prepared the way for the peaceable and glorious reign of Solomon, and the building of the temple. In this, David was a type of Chriſt, when he ſhall go forth, clothed with a veſture dipt in blood, and in righteouſneſs make war, and deſtroy the nations of mankind, his enemies, to prepare the way for the Millennium. Solomon was a type of Chriſt reigning in the Millennium, when the church ſhall riſe to a ſtate of beauty and glory, of which Solomon's temple was a type, when the meek ſhall inherit the earth, and delight themſelves in the abundance of peace.

The coming of Chriſt, in favour of his church and of the redeemed, is ſpoken of as a time of vengeance to his and their enemies, in which they ſhall be puniſhed and deſtroyed, and his people ſhall be avenged on them. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, becauſe he hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, *and the day of vengeance of our God*, to comfort all that mourn. "For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come."* "And ſhall not God avenge his own elect, who cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them: I tell you that he will avenge them ſpeedily."† "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy Apoſtles, and Prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, ſaying, Hallelujah! Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his ſervants at her hand."‡

Balaam, in his remarkable prophecy of Chriſt and his kingdom, ſpeaking of this latter day, when the Roman empire ſhall come to an end, and Chriſt ſhall have the dominion, repreſents this event as attended with great deſtruction of men. "Out of Jacob ſhall come he that ſhall have dominion, and ſhall deſtroy him that remaineth in the city. And he took up his parable, and ſaid, "Alas, who ſhall live when God doth this!" This expreſſes a great and general deſtruction of men, ſo that comparatively few of them will be left alive.§ The ſame is predicted in the ſong which God directed

* Iſai. lxi. 1, 2. lxiii. 4. † Luke xviii. 7, 8.
‡ Rev. xviii. 20. xix. 1, 2. § Numb. xxiv. 17—24.

rected Moſes to rehearſe to the children of Iſrael, to be preſerved by them.* "For I lift my hand to heaven, and ſay, I live forever. If (or when) I whet my glittering ſword, and mine hand take hold on judgment I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with their blood (and my ſword ſhall devour fleſh) and that with the blood of the ſlain, and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy. Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people; for he will avenge the blood of his ſervants, and will render vengeance to his adverſaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people." This prophecy is very parallel with that which has been mentioned, which relates to the great battle.† The ſame events are predicted in the following words of Moſes: "There is none like unto the God of Jeſhurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the ſky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlaſting arms: And he ſhall thruſt out the enemy from before thee, and ſhall ſay, Deſtroy them. Iſrael then ſhall dwell in ſafety alone. The fountain of Jacob ſhall be upon a land of corn and wine; alſo his heavens ſhall drop down dew."‡ In theſe words, God is repreſented as riding forth to thruſt out and deſtroy the enemies of his people; and upon this the proſperity of his church, the true Iſrael, is introduced. This prophecy therefore coincides with the deſcription of the battle in the Revelation, as introductory to the Millennium. The ſame events are predicted in the prayer or ſong of Hannah. "He will keep the feet of his ſaints, and the wicked ſhall be ſilent in darkneſs; for by ſtrength ſhall no man prevail. The adverſaries of the Lord ſhall be broken to pieces: Out of heaven ſhall he thunder upon them. The Lord ſhall judge the ends of the earth, and he ſhall give ſtrength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed."§

This battle, by which the wicked will be deſtroyed, and the reign of Chriſt and his church on earth introduced, is frequently brought into view and predicted in the book of Pſalms. The following predictions of this kind, are worthy to be obſerved:— "Aſk of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmoſt parts of the earth for thy poſſeſſion. Thou ſhalt break them with a rod of iron, thou ſhalt daſh them in pieces like

* Deut. xxxii. 40, 41, 42, 43. † Rev. xviii. 20. xix 1, 2.
‡ Deut. xxxiii. 26, 27, 28. § 1 Sam. ii. 9, 10.

like a potter's veſſel."* There is reference to this prediction and promiſe in the following words of Chriſt: "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he ſhall rule them with a rod of iron; as the veſſels of a potter ſhall they be broken to pieces, even as I received of my Father."† The followers of Chriſt are ſaid to do what he does for them, and in their behalf in deſtroying their enemies, as they are engaged in the ſame cauſe, and are with him in theſe works of vengeance, and they who have overcome, and have arrived to heaven, will be with him in a peculiar manner, when he ſhall come forth to fight this great battle, and daſh the nations of the world into pieces, as a potter's veſſel is broken. Therefore, there is again reference to thoſe words in the ſecond Pſalm, when Chriſt is repreſented as riding forth to the battle there deſcribed, followed by the armies in heaven, comprehending all who ſhall then have overcome. "And out of his mouth goeth a ſharp ſword, that with it he ſhould ſmite the nations: And he ſhall rule them with a rod of iron: And he treadeth the wine preſs of the fierceneſs and wrath of Almighty God."‡ This is certainly the ſame with the battle of that great day of Almighty God, mentioned in the ſixteenth chapter, as has been ſhown; and is predicted in the words now quoted from the ſecond Pſalm.—There is a prediction of the ſame battle deſcribed in the nineteenth chapter of the Revelation, in the following words: "Gird thy ſword upon thy thigh, O moſt mighty; with thy glory and thy majeſty. And in thy majeſty ride proſperouſly, becauſe of truth and meekneſs, and righteouſneſs: And thy right hand ſhall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are ſharp in the heart of the king's enemies, whereby the people fall under thee."§ In the next Pſalm, the proſperity of the church is predicted, which will take place in the Millennium; and the battle by which it will be introduced and effected is alſo deſcribed. "There is a river, the ſtreams whereof ſhall make glad the city of our God. God is in the midſt of her; ſhe ſhall not be moved: God ſhall help her, and that right early. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered his voice, the earth melted. Come, behold the works of the Lord, what deſolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to ceaſe unto the end of the earth, he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the ſpear in ſunder, he burneth the chariot

* Pſal. ii. 8, 9.
† Rev. ii. 26, 27.
‡ Rev. xix. 14, 15.
§ Pſal. xlv. 3, 4, 5.

in the fire. Be ſtill, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth."

The twenty firſt Pſalm contains a prediction of Chriſt, and foretells the deſtruction of the wicked, as introducing his reign on earth, and the proſperity and joy of the church. "Thine hand ſhall find out all thine enemies, thy right hand ſhall find out thoſe that hate thee. Thou ſhalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: The Lord ſhall ſwallow them up in his wrath, and the fire ſhall devour them. Their fruit ſhalt thou deſtroy from the earth, and their ſeed from among the children of men: For they intended evil againſt thee; they imagined a miſchievous device, which they are not able to perform. Therefore ſhalt thou make them turn their back, when thou ſhalt make ready thine arrows upon thy ſtrings, againſt the face of them. Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own ſtrength: So ſhall we ſing and praiſe thy power."*

That the wicked ſhall be cut off and deſtroyed from the earth, that the ſaints may inherit it, is foretold throughout the thirty ſeventh Pſalm. "Evil doers ſhall be cut off: But thoſe that wait upon the Lord, they ſhall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked ſhall not be; Yea, thou ſhalt diligently conſider his place, and it ſhall not be. But the meek ſhall inherit the earth, and delight themſelves in the abundance of peace. Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he ſhall exalt thee to inherit the earth: When the wicked are cut off, thou ſhalt ſee it. The tranſgreſſors ſhall be deſtroyed together; the end of the wicked ſhall be cut off. But the ſalvation of the righteous is of the Lord," &c.

The ſame thing is brought into view in the ſeventy fifth, ſeventy ſixth, and ninety ſeventh Pſalms. "God is the judge, he putteth down one, and ſetteth up another. For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the ſame; but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth ſhall wring them out, and drink them. All the horns of the wicked alſo will I cut off; but the horns of the righteous ſhall be exalted. In Judah, is God known, his name is great in Iſrael. In Salem alſo is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion. There brake he the arrows of the bow, the ſhield, and the ſword, and the battle. Thou art more glorious and excellent than the

* Verſ. 8—13.

the mountains of prey. The ſtout hearted are ſpoiled, they have ſlept their ſleep: And none of the men of might have found their hands. At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horſe are caſt into a dead ſleep. Thou didſt cauſe judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared and was ſtill, when God aroſe to judgment, to ſave all the meek of the earth. He ſhall cut off the ſpirit of princes: He is terrible to the kings of the earth." "The Lord reigneth, let the people rejoice; let the multitude of iſles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkneſs are round about him, righteouſneſs and judgment are the habitation of his throne. A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. His lightnings enlightned the world: The earth ſaw, and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the preſence of the Lord; at the preſence of the Lord of the whole earth. Confounded be all they that ſerve graven images, that boaſt themſelves of idols.—Worſhip him all ye gods." This battle is brought into view, and foretold in the 110th Pſalm. "The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, ſit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footſtool. The Lord ſhall ſend the rod of thy ſtrength out of Zion; rule thou in the midſt of thine enemies. The Lord at thy right hand ſhall ſtrike through kings in the day of his wrath, (i. e. in the great day of battle.) He ſhall judge among the heathen, he ſhall fill the places with the dead bodies; he ſhall wound the heads over many countries."

In the prophecy of Iſaiah, this battle, as it has been explained, is often brought into view, as connected with the proſperity of the church of Chriſt on earth, and introductory to it: Some inſtances of this will be mentioned. In the five firſt verſes of the ſecond chapter, there is a prophecy of the happy ſtate of the church in the laſt days, that is, in the Millennium. In the four next verſes is a deſcription of the corruption, worldlineſs and idolatry of the viſible church, and conſequently of the world in general, as the reaſon of the diſpleaſure with them, and his puniſhing them. And from the tenth verſe to the end of the chapter, the manifeſtation of his diſpleaſure, in his fighting againſt them, and puniſhing them, is deſcribed. "Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the duſt, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majeſty. The lofty looks of man ſhall be humbled, and the haughtineſs of men ſhall be bowed down, and the Lord alone ſhall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of hoſts ſhall be upon every one that is

proud

proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he ſhall be brought low. And the idols he ſhall utterly aboliſh. And they ſhall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majeſty, when he ariſeth to ſhake terribly the earth."

The eleventh chapter contains a prediction of the Millennium, and of the ſlaughter of the wicked of the earth, which ſhall make way for it. "With righteouſneſs ſhall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity, for the meek of the earth: And he ſhall ſmite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips ſhall he ſlay the wicked."* Theſe laſt words are parellel with thoſe in the Revelation, by which this battle, and the effect of it are expreſſed. "And out of his mouth goeth a ſharp ſword, that with it he ſhould ſmite the nations, and he ſhall rule them with a rod of iron. And the remnant were ſlain with the ſword of him who ſat on the horſe, which ſword proceedeth out of his mouth."†

In the thirteenth chapter is a prediction of the ſame thing: "Howl ye, for the day of the Lord is at hand; it ſhall come as a deſtruction from the Almighty. Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath, and fierce anger, to lay the earth deſolate: And he ſhall deſtroy the ſinners thereof out of it. And will puniſh the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cauſe the arrogancy of the proud to ceaſe, and will lay low the haughtineſs of the terrible."‡ What is ſaid in this chapter, has reference to ancient Babylon, and the deſtruction of that, and of other nations, in order to the deliverance and reſtoration of Iſrael. But it evidently has chief reference to the deſtruction of ſpiritual Babylon, and all the wicked in the world, in order to the deliverance and proſperity of the true, ſpiritual Iſrael of God, and will be moſt completely fulfilled in the latter, of which the former are types and ſhadows. As thoſe prophecies which have a primary reſpect to the type, do generally, if not always, look forward to the antitype; and have their full and chief accompliſhment in that, and the events which relate to it.

The twenty fourth chapter is wholly on this ſubject, and deſcribes the battle of that great day of God Almighty, and the ſlaughter of the wicked, in clear and ſtriking language, in conſequence of which, the church and people of God ſhall ſpread and proſper.

* Verſe 4. † Rev. xix. 15, 21. ‡ Verſe 6—11.

proſper. "Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waſte, and turneth it upſide down, and ſcattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. The earth ſhall be utterly emptied; for the Lord hath ſpoken this word. The earth mourneth and fadeth away: The world languiſheth and fadeth away: The haughty people of the earth do languiſh. The earth is alſo defiled under the inhabitants thereof, becauſe they have tranſgreſſed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlaſting covenant. Therefore hath the curſe devoured the earth, and they who dwell therein are deſolate: Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left. The city of confuſion is broken down: Every houſe is ſhut up, that no man may remain. In the city is left deſolation, and the gate is ſmitten with deſtruction. When thus it ſhall be, in the midſt of the earth, among the people, there ſhall be as the ſhaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning of grapes, when the vintage is done. They ſhall lift up the voice, they ſhall ſing for the majeſty of the Lord," &c.

Upon this prophecy it may be obſerved, that it is a prediction of great calamities on the inhabitants of the world in general, as a puniſhment for their ſins, by which the earth is defiled; they having tranſgreſſed the laws of God, changed his ordinance, and broken the everlaſting covenant. They have broken the covenant of grace and peace, made with Noah and his children, which, if it had been ſtrictly obſerved, would have tranſmitted bleſſings, both holineſs and happineſs, to all mankind, to the end of the world. By violating this covenant, corruption and iniquity, and all the idolatry and abominations which have taken place, or ever will be practiſed among men, have been introduced. And by breaking the everlaſting covenant made with Abraham, and tranſgreſſing the laws, and changing the ordinances, which have been given and publiſhed by Moſes, and the Prophets, by Jeſus Chriſt, and his Apoſtles, which, had they been obſerved, would have preſerved the church uncorrupt, and ſpread true religion and holineſs over the whole earth; by diſregarding and violating all theſe, the world is filled with wickedneſs, which will continue and increaſe, until mankind in general ſhall be ripe for that puniſhment, which God will inflict in thoſe calamities and judgments, which will deſtroy, and ſweep from the earth, the greateſt part of the inhabitants; ſo that there will be but comparatively *few men left*, like the few olives which remain on the tree, after it is ſhaken, and the ſcattering

tering grapes, which hang on the vine, after the vintage is over. Thoſe who ſhall be left when the battle is over, will lift up their voice, and ſing for the majeſty of the Lord. They will behold the terrible works of God, in which they will ſee his terrible majeſty, and tremble, ſubmit, approve, and adore, and praiſe and pray. And then the Millennium will begin.

The prophecy goes on, and the ſame events, as to ſubſtance, and this battle, and the conſequence of it, are deſcribed in other words: "Fear and the pit, and the ſnare are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean diſſolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth ſhall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and ſhall be moved like a cottage, and the tranſgreſſion thereof ſhall be heavy upon it, and it ſhall fall, and not riſe again." This battle is deſcribed in the Revelation, in the ſame figurative language: "And there was a great earthquake, ſuch as was not ſince men were upon the earth, ſo mighty an earthquake and ſo great. And every iſland fled away, and the mountains were not found."* "And it ſhall come come to paſs in that day, that the Lord ſhall puniſh the hoſt of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they ſhall be gathered together as priſoners are gathered in the pit, and ſhall be ſhut up in the priſon; and after many days ſhall they be viſited.† Then the moon ſhall be confounded, and the ſun aſhamed, when the Lord of hoſts ſhall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jeruſalem, and before his ancients glorioufly." This prediction reſpects the great men and kings of the earth, who exalt

* Rev. xvi. 18, 20.

† What is meant by the hoſt of the high ones, and the kings of the earth being *viſited* after many days, is not ſo clear, at firſt view, and perhaps it is not now underſtood. God is often ſaid in ſcripture to *viſit* thoſe whom he puniſhes, and the word here in the original is frequently tranſlated, to puniſh. They who are ſhut up in priſon, are often confined there, to be taken out after ſome days, and receive their puniſhment. When it is here ſaid, "And after many days ſhall they be viſited;" may not the meaning be, that thoſe high ones, and kings of the earth ſhall no more appear in this world; but ſhall be ſhut up in priſon until the day of judgment, when they ſhall be brought forth and puniſhed? As the fallen angels are bound in chains of darkneſs to be reſerved unto judgment, ſo theſe unjuſt men will be reſerved unto the day of judgment, to be puniſhed. When it is ſaid of Zedekiah, that he ſhould be carried a captive to Babylon, it is added, "And there ſhall he be, until I viſit him, ſaith the Lord." Jer. xxxii. 5. That is, until God ſhould take him out of the world by death, and to judgment; ſo that he ſhould never reign as king any more.

alt themſelves in pride and wickedneſs, and tyrannize over men, and deſcribes their overthrow in this battle. They ſhall be taken as priſoners, be puniſhed for their pride and tyranny, and ſhut up that they may do no more miſchief. Thus God "will cut off the ſpirit of princes, and be terrible to the kings of the earth."* And it is here ſaid, that the Millennium ſhall follow upon this, in the reign of Chriſt and his church, "When the Lord of hoſts ſhall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jeruſalem, and before his ancients gloriouſly." "Then the moon ſhall be confounded, and the ſun aſhamed." That is, then there ſhall be ſuch ſpiritual light and glory in the flouriſhing of the kingdom of Chriſt on earth, and ſo ſuperiour to all the light and glory of the natural world, as that the latter ſhall be utterly eclipſed, and appear to be worthy of no regard, compared with the former.

The three next chapters are a continuation of prophecy of the ſame event, viz. the judgments which are to be inflicted on the falſe and degenerate profeſſors of religion, and the world of mankind in general, previous to the proſperity of the church and kingdom of Chriſt in the world, which will be evident to the careful judicious reader; and that the predictions contained in them, coincide with thoſe which have been mentioned. It is needleſs to tranſcribe any particular paſſage here, except the following:— "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and ſhut thy doors about thee: hide thyſelf as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpaſſed. For behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to puniſh the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: The earth alſo ſhall diſcloſe her blood, and ſhall no more cover her ſlain."† This muſt be a great and dreadful day of battle, puniſhment and vengeance, which ſhall fall on the inhabitants of the earth in general, when all the blood which has been, and ſhall be ſhed, from the beginning of the world to that day, ſhall be required at their hands. There is no reaſon to think, that this puniſhment has yet been inflicted; but it will doubtleſs be executed by the battle of that great day of God Almighty, mentioned in the ſixteenth chapter of the Revelation; and more particularly deſcribed, in the fourteenth and nineteenth chapters, which have been conſidered; and in the foregoing prophecies of Iſaiah, which have been now mentioned. The words which follow thoſe tranſcribed above, are, "In that day, the Lord with his

* Pſal. lxxvi. 12. † Iſai. xxvi. 20, 21.

ſore great and ſtrong ſword, ſhall puniſh leviathan the piercing ſerpent, even leviathan that crooked ſerpent, and he ſhall ſlay the dragon that is in the ſea." The ſame event is here predicted, of which there is a prophecy in the twentieth chapter of the Revelation, viz. of the dragon that old ſerpent, which is the devil and ſatan, being laid hold of, and bound and caſt into the bottomleſs pit. And the ſame conſequence of this with reſpect to the church is here foretold, as is deſcribed there, viz. the proſperity of it, by the ſpecial favour and preſence of God. "In that day ſing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment: Leſt any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." While the battle is going on, and God is puniſhing the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, his people will be hid as in a ſecret chamber; but when it is over, they will become as a flouriſhing, fruitful vineyard, producing abundance of red wine, in conſequence of the peculiar favour and care of Jeſus Chriſt, and the abundance of heavenly divine influences.

The thirty fourth, and thirty fifth chapters of Iſaiah, contain a prophecy of the Millennium, and of the day of battle which will precede it, which will conſiſt in the puniſhment of the world for their iniquity. "Come near, ye nations, to hear, and hearken, ye people: Let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies. He hath utterly deſtroyed them, he hath delivered them to the ſlaughter. For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controverſy of Zion. Strengthen ye the weak hands, confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be ſtrong, fear not: Behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and ſave you. Then the eyes of the blind ſhall be opened, and the ears of the deaf ſhall be unſtopped. Then ſhall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb ſhall ſing; for in the wilderneſs ſhall waters break out, and ſtreams in the deſert," &c. "And the ranſomed of the Lord ſhall return and come to Zion with ſongs, and everlaſting joy upon their heads; they ſhall obtain joy and gladneſs, and ſorrow and ſighing ſhall flee away."

In the forty firſt chapter of Iſaiah, God, ſpeaking to the church, and promiſing the good things and proſperity which were in ſtore

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for it in the days of the Millennium, ſays, "Behold, all they that are incenſed againſt thee, ſhall be aſhamed and confounded: They ſhall be as nothing, and they that ſtrive with thee, ſhall periſh. Thou ſhalt ſeek them, and ſhalt not find them that contended with thee: They that war againſt thee, ſhall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought. Behold, I will make thee a new, ſharp threſhing inſtrument, having teeth; thou ſhalt threſh the mountains, and beat them ſmall, and make the hills as chaff. Thou ſhalt fan them, and the wind ſhall carry them away, and the whirlwind ſhall ſcatter them: And thou ſhalt rejoice in the Lord, and ſhalt glory in the Holy One of Iſrael."

In the forty ſecond chapter, God makes promiſes to his church, which are to be accompliſhed in their fulneſs, in the days of the Millennium, and ſpeaks of the war and battle in which he will deſtroy his enemies, to open the way for the good thing which was to be done for the church. "The Lord ſhall go forth as a mighty man, he ſhall ſtir up jealouſy like a man of war: He ſhall cry, yea, roar; he ſhall prevail againſt his enemies. I have long time holden my peace, I have been ſtill, and refrained myſelf: Now will I cry like a travailing woman, I will deſtroy and devour at once. I will make waſte mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers iſlands, and I will dry up the pools. And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not, I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkneſs light before them, and crooked things ſtraight. Theſe things will I do unto them, and not forſake them."

The fifty ninth and ſixtieth chapters, are wholly on this ſubject of the Millennium. In the fourteen firſt verſes of the fifty ninth chapter, the great degree of wickedneſs of the world of mankind is deſcribed. And then God is repreſented as greatly diſpleaſed, and riſing to battle, to puniſh men for their evil deeds. "And the Lord ſaw it, and it diſpleaſed him that there was no judgment. And he ſaw that there was no man, and he wondered that there was no interceſſor: Therefore, his arm brought ſalvation unto him, and his righteouſneſs, it ſuſtained him. For he put on righteouſneſs as a breaſtplate, and an helmit of ſalvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adverſaries, recompence to his enemies; to the iſlands he will repay recompence. So ſhall

they fear the name of the Lord from the weſt, and his glory from the riſing of the ſun. When the enemy ſhall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord ſhall lift up a ſtandard againſt him." And to this battle, this work of judgment and vengeance, ſucceeds the day of light and ſalvation to the church: Thoſe who are left, ſhall repent and humble themſelves, and "fear the name of the Lord from the weſt, and his glory from the riſing of the ſun. And the Redeemer ſhall come to Zion, and to them that turn from tranſgreſſion in Jacob." It will be then ſaid to the church, "Ariſe, ſhine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is riſen upon thee."—The prophecy of the Millennium goes on through the ſixtieth, ſixty firſt, and ſixty ſecond chapters.

There is a parallel repreſentation of this battle in the ſixty third chapter, as executed by the ſame perſon who is exhibited in the nineteenth chapter of the Revelation, riding forth to make war in righteouſneſs, and fighting this ſame battle, in which the wicked then on earth will be ſlain. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with died garments from Bozrah?* This who is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatneſs of his ſtrength? I who ſpeak in righteouſneſs, mighty to ſave. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him who treadeth in the wine fat? I have trodden the wine preſs alone, and of the people there was none with me: For I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and the blood ſhall be ſprinked upon my garments, and I will ſtain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help, and I wondered that there was none to uphold: Therefore, mine own arm brought ſalvation unto me, and my fury it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their ſtrength to the earth."

The ſame thing is predicted in the ſixty ſixth chapter: "A voice of noiſe from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the Lord who rendereth recompence to his enemies. And the hand of the Lord ſhall be known towards his ſervants, and his indignation

* Bozrah was in the land of Edom. The Edomites, were implacable enemies to the people of God, and are in the prophecies of Iſaiah, and elſewhere, put for the enemies of God and his church in general, who ſhall be deſtroyed, as the Edomites were, of whom the Edomites, and their deſtruction were a type.

dignation towards his enemies. For behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire, and by his sword, will the Lord plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many." These predictions of the slaughter and destruction of the wicked, are here intermixed with promises of salvation and prosperity to the church: "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye who love her: Rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: That ye may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; That ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream. And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb."

A passage in the tenth chapter of Jeremiah, seems to refer to the same event. The folly, idolatry, and great wickedness of the people and nations of the earth, is mentioned and described in the first part of the chapter, upon which the following prediction is uttered: But JEHOVAH is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting King: At his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation. Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens, and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under those heavens."

In the first part of the twenty fifth chapter, there is a prophecy of the captivity of the Jews, and of other adjacent nations, by Nebuchadnezzar; and when their captivity during seventy years should be ended, Jeremiah foretells the ruin of Babylon, and the land of the Chaldeans. And the evil that was coming on the nations of the earth, which should attend the destruction of Babylon, is represented by ordering Jeremiah to take the wine cup of wrath, and cause all the nations of the earth to drink of it. And as the destruction of ancient Babylon, and the judgments which came on many other nations, was an eminent type of yet greater and more remarkable destruction of spiritual Babylon, and of all the nations of the earth, which will attend that; the prophecy is carried on beyond the type, and looks forward to the antitype, which is common in scripture prophecy; and expressions are used which cannot be applied to the former, to the type, in their full extent

and

and meaning, but to the latter, the antitype, and therefore the prophecy is accompliſhed but in part, and in a lower degree in the former; but fully and moſt completely in the latter: Therefore, the Prophet goes on, and uſes expreſſions toward the cloſe of the prophecy, which refer chiefly to the battle in which antichriſt, and the nations of the earth will fall. Such are the following: "Therefore, propheſy thou againſt them all thoſe words, and ſay unto them, The Lord ſhall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he ſhall mightily roar upon his habitation, he ſhall give a ſhout, as they that tread the grapes, againſt all the inhabitants of the earth. A noiſe ſhall come even to the ends of the earth: For the Lord hath a controverſy with the nations: He will plead with all fleſh, he will give them that are wicked to the ſword, ſaith the Lord. Thus ſaith the Lord of hoſts, Behold, evil ſhall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind ſhall be raiſed up from the coaſts of the earth. And the ſlain of the Lord ſhall be at that day, from one end of the earth, even unto the other end of the earth: They ſhall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they ſhall be dung upon the ground."* The Prophet goes on to predict the evil that ſhould come on the ſhepherds, and the principal of the flock, by whom are meant the kings and great men among the nations, who are to be brought down and deſtroyed in the battle,† which is agreeable to the forementioned prophecy in Iſaiah,‡ and to the repreſentation of the ſame battle in the Revelation.§

There is another prophecy of this in the thirtieth chapter of Jeremiah. Here the deliverance of the church from her oppreſſors, and from all her ſufferings and trouble, is promiſed; which ſhall be attended with the utter overthrow and deſtruction of the wicked, and all her enemies. That this prophecy looks beyond the deliverance of the Jews from the Babyloniſh captivity, and the evil that came on their enemies then, to the greater deliverance of the church from ſpiritual Babylon, and the general deſtruction of the wicked which ſhall attend it, of which the former was a type, is evident, not only from a number of expreſſions and promiſes which were not fully accompliſhed in the former, and have reſpect to the latter; but from the expreſs promiſe, that God will raiſe up David their king to reign over them, by whom muſt be meant

* Verſe 30—33.
† Verſe 34—38.
‡ Chap. xxiv. 21, 22.
§ Rev. xix. 18.

meant Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of David, and of whom David was an eminent type. This will appear, by attending to the following paſſages; "Alas! For that day is great, ſo that none is like it: It is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he ſhall be delivered out of it. For it ſhall come to paſs in that day, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burſt thy bonds, and ſtrangers ſhall no more ſerve themſelves of him. But they ſhall ſerve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raiſe up unto them. For I am with thee, ſaith the Lord, to ſave thee. Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have ſcattered thee, yet I will not make a full end of thee. Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind, it ſhall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked. The fierce anger of the Lord ſhall not return, until he have done it, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: In the latter days ye ſhall conſider it."*

In the book of Daniel, there is prophecy of the ſame event. "And at that time," (i. e. when antichriſt is to be deſtroyed, which is predicted in the paragraph immediately preceding theſe words) "ſhall Michael ſtand up, the great Prince who ſtandeth for the children of thy people" (that is, Jeſus Chriſt, who will ſupport and deliver his church) "And there ſhall be a time of trouble, ſuch as never was ſince there was a nation, even to that ſame time," (this is the time of the battle of that great day of God Almighty) "And at that time, thy people ſhall be delivered, every one that ſhall be found written in the book." This is the time of the deliverance of the church from the power of antichriſt, and from all wicked men, her enemies, and of her entering upon the proſperous, happy ſtate, in which the ſaints will reign on earth a thouſand years.

The Prophet Joel ſpeaks of the ſame events. From the twenty eighth verſe of the ſecond chapter of his prophecy, is a prediction of the Millennium, and the preceding evils that ſhall be inflicted on mankind: "And it ſhall come to paſs afterwards, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all fleſh," &c. "This prophecy began to be fulfilled, when the Holy Spirit was firſt poured out after the aſcention of Chriſt; but this, as has been before obſerved, was but the firſt fruits, and the prophecy will be fulfilled only in a very ſmall part, before the harveſt ſhall come in the days of the Millennium.

At

* Verſes 7, 8, 9, 11, 23, 24.

At the same time he speaks of the great evils, and terrible events which shall take place: "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be delivered." The Prophet goes on in the next chapter to speak more particularly on this subject: "For behold, in those days and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah, and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people, and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land."

Judah and Jerusalem are put for the church of Christ, being a type of that, as has been observed. The captivity of the Jews in Babylon, and their return from it, is typical of the afflicted, suffering state of the church during the reign of antichrist, and the deliverance of it from this state on the fall of antichrist, and in the Millennium. This is therefore meant, when it is said, "In those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem." When the children of Moab, Ammon, and Edom, came with a great army, combined together to destroy Judah, Jehoshaphat was directed to go forth with the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem and meet them; and had a promise that he should have no occasion to fight with them; but should stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, because the battle was not their's, but God's. Accordingly they went out, and stood still, and saw their enemies fall upon, and destroy each other, until they were all wasted away. Jehoshaphat and his people went out to their camp, and found great riches, silver and gold, and much spoil; and they spent three days in gathering it; and on the fourth day they assembled in the valley to bless and praise the Lord, which was from that called, "The valley of Berachah." This is the valley of Jehoshaphat. And to this story, these words of the Prophet Joel refer.* Moab, Ammon, and Edom, the enemies of Israel, were a type of the enemies of the church and people of God, under the gospel dispensation, among all nations. This battle and their destruction of the enemies of Judah and Jerusalem in the valley of Jehoshaphat, was a type of the overthrow of all the enemies of Christ and his church, when they shall be gathered to the battle of that

* See 2 Chron. 20th Chapter.

that great day of God Almighty. This prophecy therefore, is a prediction of the ſame event which is deſcribed in the ſixteenth chapter of the Revelation. Here it is ſaid, "I will gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoſhaphat, and will plead with them there for my people." That is, will puniſh and deſtroy them for their oppoſition to me and my church. There it is ſaid, "The kings of the earth and of the whole world, were gathered to the battle of that great day. And he gathered them together to a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon." Which paſſage has been before explained.

The Prophet farther enlarges on this ſubject in the following part of this chapter:* Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles: Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your plowſhares into ſwords, and your pruning hooks into ſpears; let the weak ſay, I am ſtrong. Aſſemble yourſelves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourſelves together round about: Thither cauſe thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the heathen be wakened and come up to the valley of Jehoſhaphat; for there will I ſit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the ſickle, for the harveſt is ripe; come, get you down, for the preſs is full, the fats overflow, for their wickedneſs is great. Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of deciſion; for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of deciſion. The ſun and moon ſhall be darkened, and the ſtars ſhall withdraw their ſhining. The Lord ſhall alſo roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jeruſalem, and the heavens and the earth ſhall ſhake; but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the ſtrength of the children of Iſrael." Every one who attends to this paſſage, will obſerve what a ſtriking ſimilitude there is between this deſcription of a battle, and that in the Revelation, which has been conſidered. God is here repreſented as fighting the battle againſt all the heathen, and deſtroying multitudes on multitudes. All the heathen, even all nations are gathered together, all armed for war, and come up to the valley of Jehoſhaphat, and there are cut off in this valley of deciſion. In the Revelation all the nations of the earth are gathered together to battle at Megiddo, typifying the ſame thing with the valley of Jehoſhaphat, and there they are ſlain. God cauſes his mighty ones to come down. And John ſays, "I ſaw heaven opened, and behold, a white horſe:

* Verſe 9, &c.

And he that ſat upon him was called faithful and true, and in righteouſneſs doth he judge, and make war. And his name is called, The word of God. And the armies in heaven followed him upon white horſes." Here there is a command to "put in the ſickle, for the harveſt is ripe: Come, get you down, for the preſs is full, the fats overflow, for the wickedneſs is great." Much the ſame repreſentation is made of this battle in the Revelation,* which has been particularly mentioned already. The Prophet Joel goes on to the end of his prophecy deſcribing the happy ſtate of the church, which ſhall ſucceed this battle, which has never yet taken place, and is like other deſcriptions of the Millennium ſtate, by the Prophets. "Then ſhall Jeruſalem be holy, and there ſhall no ſtranger paſs through her any more. And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, that the mountains ſhall drop down new wine, and the hills ſhall flow with milk. Egypt ſhall be a deſolation, and Edom ſhall be a deſolate wilderneſs, for the violence againſt the children of Judah, becauſe they have ſhed innocent blood in their land. But Judah ſhall dwell forever, and Jeruſalem from generation to generation."

The Prophet Micah, propheſied of Chriſt and his kingdom, in the extent and glory of it in the latter day; and of the deſtruction of the wicked men, and the nations of the world, in favour of the church of Chriſt, and in order to the proſperity of his people.—All this is contained in the fifth chapter of his prophecy. "And He (i. e. Chriſt)* ſhall ſtand and feed in the ſtrength of the Lord, in the majeſty of the name of the Lord his God: And they ſhall abide; for now ſhall he be great unto the ends of the earth. And the remnant of Jacob ſhall be among the Gentiles, in the midſt of many people, as a lion among the beaſts of the foreſt, as a young lion among the flocks of ſheep; who if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. Thine hand ſhall be lift up upon thine adverſaries, and all thine enemies ſhall be cut off. And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, ſuch as they have not heard."†

The prophecy of Zephaniah has reſpect to the battle of that great day of God Almighty, and the ſucceeding happy and proſperous ſtate of the church in the Millennium. It has indeed a primary reſpect to the evils and puniſhment brought upon Jeruſalem and the Jews by the Chaldeans, for their apoſtacy and idolatry;

* Chap. xiv. 14, &c. † Verſes 4, 8, 9, 15,

atry; and to the calamities and deſtruction which came upon the nations at that time, and previous to the reſtoration of the Jews; and to their reſtoration from their captivity, and return to their own land; which were types of the much greater and more important events, in the laſt days, in which all nations will be more immediately concerned; and to which the prophecy has an ultimate and chief reſpect. It was fulfilled but in part, and in a ſmall degree, in the former events; and will have the chief and complete accompliſhment in the latter; as has been before obſerved concerning other prophecies of the ſame kind. Jeruſalem in her moſt pure ſtate, when the ſtatutes and ordinances which God had preſcribed, were in ſome good degree obſerved, was a type of the true church of Chriſt. Therefore, under this name, and that of Mount Zion, and Iſrael, the Prophets ſpeak of the true church in all future ages. But Jeruſalem, conſidered in her moſt corrupt ſtate of apoſtacy, was a type of the falſe church of Rome, and of all chriſtian churches when they apoſtatize from the holy doctrines and precepts of the goſpel. Therefore, Chriſt is ſaid to be crucified in the great city, by which is meant the apoſtate church of Rome, and all who partake of her corruptions; becauſe he was crucified at Jeruſalem, which was then a type of that great city, in her apoſtacy, and enmity againſt Chriſt, and his true church.* The nations round about the land of Iſrael and Judea, and all thoſe who at times afflicted and oppreſſed the viſible people of God, and were enemies to them; were types of the enemies of the church of Chriſt, in the time of her affliction; eſpecially of all the idolatrous nations and wicked men, who oppoſe the proſperity of the church, and are to be deſtroyed, in order to her deliverance and ſalvation. With theſe obſervations in view, this prophecy may be read, and the whole of it applied to the battle and events which will take place previous to the introduction of the Millennium, predicted in the Revelation, under the ſeventh vial; and to the proſperity of the church which will then commence. Then it will have its full accompliſhment; and many of the expreſſions in it, conſidered in their moſt natural and extenſive meaning, cannot be accommodated to any events which have taken place, and are not yet fulfilled. Some of theſe will be now mentioned. The prophecy begins with the following words:—

* Rev. xi. 8.

"I will utterly conſume all things from off the land,* ſaith the Lord. I will conſume man and beaſt: I will conſume the fowls of the heaven, and the fiſhes of the ſea, and the ſtumbling blocks with the wicked, and I will cut off man from off the land (the earth) ſaith the Lord. Hold thy peace at the preſence of the Lord God: For the day of the Lord is at hand: For the Lord hath prepared a ſacrifice, he hath bid his gueſts. The great day of the Lord is near; it is near, and haſteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord. The mighty men ſhall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and diſtreſs, a day of waſteneſs and deſolation, a day of darkneſs and gloomineſs, a day of clouds and thick darkneſs, a day of the trumpet and alarm againſt the fenced cities, and againſt the high towers. And I will bring diſtreſs upon men, that they ſhall walk like blind men, becauſe they have ſinned againſt the Lord: And their blood ſhall be poured out as duſt, and their fleſh as dung. Neither their ſilver, nor their gold, ſhall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land (earth) ſhall be devoured by the fire of his jealouſy: For he ſhall make even a ſpeedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land (earth.) Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; ſeek righteouſneſs; ſeek meekneſs: It may be ye ſhall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger. Therefore, wait upon me, ſaith the Lord, until the day that I riſe up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may aſſemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, and all my fierce anger:—For all the earth ſhall be devoured with the fire of my jealouſy." The parallel and likeneſs between this prophecy, and that of the battle in the Revelation, is worthy of particular notice. This is called "The great day of the Lord: The day of the Lord's wrath: A day of diſtreſs and deſolation: The day that God will riſe up to the prey, to *gather* the nations, and aſſemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them his indignation, and fierce anger."—In the Revelation, the whole world were gathered to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. The words, THAT great day of battle, ſeem to have reference to ſome day which had already

* The word in the original tranſlated *land*, is the ſame which in other places in this prophecy, and in many other places in ſcripture, is tranſlated *earth*, and doubtleſs ſhould have been ſo tranſlated here, and in ſome other paſſages which will be tranſcribed.

ready been made known, and undoubtedly refer to the great day of God's wrath, which is mentioned in the prophecy before us, and by the other Prophets. "And he gathered them together into a place, called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon. And the ſeventh angel poured out his vial (of wrath) into the air. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, ſuch as was not ſince men were upon the earth, ſo mighty an earthquake and ſo great. And the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceneſs of his wrath. And the remnant were ſlain with the ſword of him who ſat on the horſe; and the fowls were filled with their fleſh." In this prophecy it is ſaid, "The Lord hath prepared a ſacrifice, he hath bid his gueſts." In the Revelation the fowls of heaven are invited to come to the ſupper of the great God, to eat the fleſh of kings, &c.

According to this Prophet, when the nations and kingdoms of the world have been gathered, and God has poured upon them his indignation, even all his fierce anger; and all the earth ſhall be devoured with the fire of his jealouſy, the ſcene is changed, and the remnant which are left in the earth, the few afflicted and poor people, ſhall repent and pray, and humble themſelves before God, and return and put their truſt in him alone: And God will return to them in a way of mercy, and build them up, and they ſhall be comforted, rejoice and proſper. This is repreſented in the laſt chapter, from verſe ninth to the end of the prophecy: "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to ſerve him with one conſent. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, my ſuppliants, even the daughters of my diſperſed, ſhall bring mine offering. I will alſo leave in thee an afflicted and poor people, and they ſhall truſt in the name of the Lord. The remnant of Iſrael ſhall not do iniquity, nor ſpeak lies; neither ſhall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: For they ſhall feed and lie down, and none ſhall make them afraid. Sing, O daughter of Zion, ſhout, O Iſrael, be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jeruſalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath caſt out thine enemy: The King of Iſrael, even the Lord, is in the midſt of thee. Thou ſhalt not ſee evil any more," &c. to the end of the prophecy.

This

This is ſet in much the ſame light in the Revelation.* When the battle there deſcribed is over, the Millennium is introduced.

There is a prophecy by the Prophet Haggai to the ſame purpoſe with the foregoing: "Again the word of the Lord came unto Haggai, ſaying, Speak to Zerubbabel, governour of Judah, ſaying, I will ſhake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will deſtroy the ſtrength of the kingdoms of the heathen, and I will overthrow the chariots, and thoſe who ride in them; and the horſes and their riders ſhall come down, every one by the ſword of his brother. In that day, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, I will take thee, O Zerubbabel my ſervant, and will make thee as a ſignet; for I have choſen thee."† Zerubbabel was a type of Chriſt, and what is here ſaid of the type was not fulfilled in him; but is to be fulfilled in Jeſus Chriſt the antitype, when he ſhall reign on the earth, and his church fill the world, and "he ſhall be exalted and extolled, and be very high."‡ In order to this, the great changes are to take place, repreſented here by ſhaking the heavens and the earth, and by overthrowing the throne and ſtrength of all the kingdoms and nations, and their being deſtroyed by the ſword: Which is the battle repreſented in the Revelation, by thunders and lightnings, and a great earthquake, and the falling of the cities of the nations, &c.

The Prophet Zechariah alſo ſpeaks of theſe things. He propheſies of the Millennium, and of the deſtruction of all the people and nations who oppoſe the intereſt of the church, as preceding the days of her proſperity, and introductory to it. "And in that day will I make Jeruſalem (the true church of Chriſt) a burdenſome ſtone for all people: All that burden themſelves with it, ſhall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be *gathered together* againſt it. In that day, ſaith the Lord, I will ſmite every horſe with aſtoniſhment, and his rider with madneſs; and I will open mine eyes upon the houſe of Judah, and will ſmite every horſe of the people with blindneſs. In that day ſhall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, and he that is feeble among them at that day, ſhall be as David; and the houſe of David ſhall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, that I will ſeek to deſtroy all the nations that come againſt Jeruſalem."§ "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh,

* Chapters xix, and xx.
† Hagg. ii. 20, 21, 22, 23.
‡ Iſai. lii. 13.
§ Zech. xii. 3, 4, 8, 9.

cometh, and thy ſpoil ſhall be divided in the midſt of thee. For I will gather all nations againſt Jeruſalem to battle; and the city ſhall be taken, and the houſes rifled, and the women raviſhed, and half of the city ſhall go forth into captivity, and the reſidue of the people ſhall not be cut off from the city." This is the gathering of the kingdoms and nations of the whole world, unto the battle, by the unclean ſpirits which go forth to corrupt the world, and arm them againſt God, and his people, by the practice of all kinds of wickedneſs, by which the beſt part of the church will be greatly corrupted; and the ſaints will ſuffer very much, being beſieged on all ſides by very wicked men, mentioned in the Revelation,* which has been explained.

The Prophet goes on to deſcribe the battle of that great day of God Almighty, which is mentioned in the Revelation: "Then ſhall the Lord go forth, and fight againſt thoſe nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And this ſhall be the plague wherewith the Lord will ſmite all the people that have fought againſt Jeruſalem: Their fleſh ſhall conſume away, while they ſtand upon their feet, and their eyes ſhall conſume away in their holes, and their tongue ſhall conſume away in their mouth."†

Malachi propheſied of the Millennium, and the preceding ſlaughter of the wicked, in the battle of that great day of God Almighty, in the following conciſe and ſtriking language: "Behold the day cometh that ſhall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, ſhall be ſtubble, and the day that cometh ſhall burn them up, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, that it ſhall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name, ſhall the ſun of righteouſneſs ariſe with healing in his wings; and ye ſhall go forth and grow up as calves in the ſtall. And ye ſhall tread down the wicked; for they ſhall be aſhes under the ſoles of your feet, in the day that I ſhall do this, ſaith the Lord of hoſts."‡

FROM the above detail it appears, that the prophecy in the Revelation of the Millennium, and of the manner in which it will be introduced, is agreeable to the ancient prophecies of theſe ſame events: That previous to this, the chriſtian world, and mankind in general, will become more corrupt in the practice of all kinds of wickedneſs: That God will riſe out of his place, and come forth to do his work, his ſtrange work, to puniſh the world for their wickedneſs,

* Rev. xvi. 13, 14. † Verſes 3, 12. ‡ Mal. iv. 1, 2, 3.

wickedneſs, and manifeſt his high diſpleaſure and anger with mankind, for their perverſeneſs and obſtinacy in rebellion againſt him, and in oppoſition to his church: That this is the battle of that great day of God Almighty, in which he will, by a courſe of various and multiplied calamities and ſore judgments, greater and more general, and continued longer than any which have taken place before, reduce and deſtroy mankind, ſo that comparatively few will be left; an afflicted and poor people, who will repent and humble themſelves before God, and truſt in the mighty Saviour; for whom he will appear in great mercy, and pour down the Holy Spirit on them and their offspring; and they will multiply and fill the world. And thus the kingdom and dominion, and the greatneſs of the kingdom under the whole heaven, ſhall be given to the people of the ſaints of the Moſt High, and the church will reign on earth a thouſand years.

It appears reaſonable and proper, that God ſhould manifeſt his diſpleaſure with the inhabitants of Chriſtendom, and of the world, for their long continued abuſe of his goodneſs, and of all the means uſed with them to reclaim them; and their perſeverance in their oppoſition to Chriſt and his people, and increaſing in all kinds of wickedneſs, while he has been waiting upon them, even to long ſuffering; by inflicting on them ſevere and awful judgments, and remarkably fearful puniſhments, to vindicate the honour of his own name; and avenge his church and people, who have been ſo greatly injured, deſpiſed and trampled upon; and that it may be made known by this, as well as in other ways, that the God of chriſtians, the God and Saviour revealed in the Bible, is the true God. And this will give great inſtruction to thoſe who ſhall be left, who will have a heart to perceive and underſtand. They will have before their eyes a leſſon, ſuited moſt effectually to teach them the exceeding depravity and wickedneſs of man; and how real and dreadful is the divine diſpleaſure and anger with ſinners: How undone and utterly loſt forever, all men are, without a Redeemer and Sanctifier; by whom they may be recovered from the power of ſin and ſatan, and obtain the forgiveneſs of their ſins, and the favour of God: How dependent they are on ſovereign grace for all good, for every thing better than complete deſtruction; by which alone they are diſtinguiſhed from thoſe who perſevere in their ſins, and periſh. And all this will tend to guard them againſt ſin, to promote their repentance and humiliation, and to lead them

them to more earneſt, conſtant and united prayer to God for mercy, than was ever exerciſed before by men: And to aſcribe all the favours they ſhall receive, which will then be much more abundant than ever before, to the free, ſovereign grace of God; and to give him the praiſe of all.

In the beginning of this ſection it was ſuggeſted, that by attending to the events which are to take place, according to ſcripture prophecy, before the commencement of the Millennium, farther evidence would come into view, that this will not be much ſooner or later, than the beginning of the ſeventh millenary of the world. This evidence has been now produced. The ſixth vial is now running, and probably began to be poured out before the end of the laſt century, and will continue to run a conſiderable part of the next century; under which the power of antichriſt is to be greatly weakened, and the way prepared for his utter overthrow: And at the ſame time, the chriſtian world, and mankind in general, will be ſo far from reforming, that they will grow more and more corrupt in doctrine and practice, and greedily run into all manner of vice and wickedneſs, until they are prepared for the battle of that great day, and ripe to be cut down and deſtroyed, by a ſeries of divine judgments, which will be inflicted under the ſeventh vial, and will iſſue in the introduction of the Millennium.

The river Euphrates has been drying up, and the way has been preparing, for near a century paſt, for the utter ruin of the Pope and the hierarchy of the church of Rome, and the time of the utter overthrow of antichriſt appears to be haſtening on. But this is not accompanied with any reformation in that church, or in the Greek church, or in the proteſtant churches in general: But very much to the contrary appears. Ignorance, error and deluſion, and open vice and wickedneſs abound, and are increaſing; and infidelity is rapidly ſpreading in the chriſtian world. The unclean ſpirits, like frogs, appear to have gone forth to all the kings' courts, and the great men in Chriſtendom; and the greateſt corruption and abominable vices are ſpread among them, and real chriſtianity is neglected, run down and oppoſed. And the multitude in general, both learned and unlearned, are going the ſame way. Deiſm, and a multitude of errors which lead to it, and even to atheiſm, are increaſing. A ſpirit of irreligion, ſelfiſhneſs, pride and worldlineſs, is exceeding ſtrong and prevalent, pro-

ducing all kinds of wickedneſs, and a ſtrong and general oppoſition to true religion, and the great truths and doctrines of the goſpel. And the heathen world are no more diſpoſed to become chriſtians, than they ever were: And the way to their converſion to chriſtianity appears to be more obſtructed; and the few attempts that are made to chriſtianize any of them, are generally unſucceſsful. And Mahometans and Jews hate and oppoſe chriſtianity as much as ever they did, if not more, and are ſinking farther down in ſtupidity, ignorance, infidelity, worldlineſs, and all kinds of vice.

It is certain, that moſt of the evil things now mentioned, have been found among the body of mankind, in a greater or leſs degree, in all ages; and the pious friends of God, and true religion, have complained of, and lamented them. And it is probable, that the repreſentation now made, will be conſidered by many, only as the revival of the old complaint, by thoſe who are of an illiberal, gloomy caſt of mind, and wholly without foundation, in truth and fact. But this opinion, though it ſhould be generally imbibed, and aſſerted with great confidence, will not be any evidence that the repreſentation is not true and juſt; but will rather ſerve to confirm it. For it is commonly, if not always, the caſe, that in times of great degeneracy, and the prevalence of ignorance, error and vice, they who are the greateſt inſtances of it, and moſt ſunk into darkneſs and deluſion, are deluded in this alſo, and entertain a good opinion of themſelves, and of others who join with them, being ignorant of their true character. They put darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs, and call evil good, and good evil. And while real chriſtianity and true virtue, founded upon principles of truth and genuine piety, are abandoned, oppoſed and forſaken, they perceive it not, but think all is well, and much better than before. And they may undertake to *reform chriſtianity*, and think it is greatly reformed, when every doctrine and duty is excluded from it, which is contrary to the ſelfiſhneſs, pride, and worldly ſpirit of man, and little or nothing is left of it, but the mere name, to diſtinguiſh it from the religion of infidels or heathen; and nothing to render it preferable to theſe.

An appeal muſt be made, in this caſe, from the judgment of thoſe of this character, to thoſe who are born of the Spirit of God; are created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works; by which they are become new creatures, and turned from the darkneſs of this world,

to

to marvellous light: Who are not conformed to this world, but have overcome it, and are transformed by the renewing of their minds, ſo as to know and diſtinguiſh what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God, which is revealed in the ſcriptures. They who are thus ſpiritual, judge of all things reſpecting the doctrines and duties of chriſtianity, in ſome good meaſure, according to the truth. To ſuch, eſpecially thoſe of them who have a general knowledge of the ſtate of religion in the chriſtian world, and of the deluge of ignorance, error and vice with which it is overflowed, it is preſumed, the above deſcription will not appear exaggerated, and that there are greater ſtrides, and ſwifter progreſs made in infidelity, and irreligion, error and falſe religon, in vice and all kinds of wickedneſs, than have been ever known before; and that all theſe are more common, have a wider ſpread, and are carried to a higher degree at this time, than in former ages; and threaten to bear down all truth, and real chriſtianity before them: And that the appearance of things, in this reſpect, is juſt ſuch as might be reaſonably expected when the unclean ſpirits like frogs, the ſpirits of devils, are gone forth with a licenſe and deſign to ſpread their influence among men, and deceive and corrupt the whole world.

There is reaſon to conclude, from what has already taken place of this kind, and from the prophecy of theſe unclean ſpirits, that they have not yet finiſhed their work; but that the world, eſpecially that part of it called chriſtian and proteſtant, will yet make greater and more rapid advances, in all kinds of moral corruption, and open wickedneſs, till it will come to that ſtate in which it will be fully ripe, and prepared to be cut down by the ſickle of divine juſtice and wrath: And it may take near half a century from this time for theſe evil ſpirits to complete their work, and gather the world to this battle. But during this time, whether it be longer or ſhorter, and before the battle ſhall come on, there will probably be great and remarkable judgments, and ſore, unuſual and ſurpriſing calamities, in one place and another, ſuited to awaken and warn mankind, and lead them to fear God, repent and reform; which being by moſt diſregarded and abuſed, will become the occaſion of greater hardneſs of heart and obſtinacy, which will be a prelude and provocation to the battle of that great day, in which mankind will be deſtroyed in the manner, and to the degree, which has been deſcribed above. This battle, as has been before

obſerved, will not be fought and finiſhed at once; but by a ſeries of different and increaſing calamities and ſore puniſhments, mankind will be reduced and brought down, and every high thing levelled to the ground, in which the hand of God will be remarkably viſible, and his arm of power and vengeance made bare.—And it may take more than a century to effect all this, in the wiſeſt and beſt manner; ſo that it will not be finiſhed till near the beginning of the ſeventh millenary of the world.

It has been obſerved, that while antichriſt is coming down, and the way preparing for the utter extinction of the church of Rome, and all her appendages, the world in general, and eſpecially the chriſtian world, will make ſwift advances in deluſion and all kinds of wickedneſs; and infidelity will make great progreſs, under the influence of the ſpirits of devils, which are gone forth to the whole world. And it may be here obſerved, that the increaſe and ſpreading of this wickedneſs, and ſpirit of infidelity, will doubtleſs be the means of weakening and preparing the way for the overthrow of that church. The ten horns, or kings, which ſhall hate the whore, and make her deſolate and naked, and eat her fleſh, and burn her with fire, will do this from a ſelfiſh, worldly ſpirit, and under the influence of infidelity, and oppoſition to all kinds of religion. And the prevalence of deiſm and atheiſm in popiſh countries and nations, which are the natural fruit and offspring of the abominable practices and tyranny of the antichriſtian church, has been the means of expoſing the ſuperſtition and wickedneſs of that church, and weakening the papal hierarchy. And deiſts, and other wicked men, may be made the inſtruments of pulling down that antichriſtian fabrick yet farther; as the heathen Romans were of deſtroying the corrupt church of Iſrael. If ſo, the fall of the Pope will be ſo far from implying a revival of true religion; that it may be attended with the contrary, viz. infidelity, immorality, and all kinds of wickedneſs, as the means of it, ſo far as it will be effected by the inſtrumentality of men.

WHEN John is deſcribing the viſion under the ſixth vial, of the unclean ſpirits like frogs, going forth to the whole world to gather them to the battle, he ſtops before he has finiſhed the relation, and Jeſus Chriſt himſelf ſpeaks the following words: "Behold, I come as a thief. Bleſſed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, leſt he walk naked, and they ſee his ſhame."* By which he

* Rev. xvi. 15.

he warns those in particular, who shall live when this vial is poured out, of their danger of being seduced by those evil spirits, and those who are corrupted by them, and behaving unworthy of their christian character; and sets before them the strongest motives to deter them from apostacy, and induce them to be faithful to him, to *watch and keep their garments*: To continue spiritually awake, and properly attentive to all those things which concern them as christians; to their situation and state, their own exercises and conduct, to the cause of Christ, and the enemies with whom they are surrounded; to maintain their christian profession, and act agreeable to it, in the exercise of all christian graces; trusting in the great Captain and General, who only can save them, and his church; and waiting for him with a patient continuance in well doing. *He comes as a thief.* The thief does not make his presence and designs known to any but those who are joined with him, being his friends, and engaged in the same design with him. So, though Christ be present with his church and people, and is in the midst of his enemies, having all men and devils in his hands; and ordering and conducting every thing that is done by them, in this time of the greatest degeneracy, and high handed wickedness; and knows how to answer his own ends by it and them, and to protect his people, and bring the wheel over his enemies; yet, in this his coming and presence, he is not seen or thought of by the corrupt, wicked world: They think nothing of his presence, and see not his hand: He is seen only by his friends, who are engaged in the same cause with him, who watch and keep their garments. They see his hand in all those things, behold him present, and doing his own work; and are protected from all evil by him, while the wicked fall into mischief, and are destroying themselves. And when he comes forth to the battle, and rises up to the prey, and to punish the world for their wickedness, the wicked will not see him, they will not know their danger, or believe he is come, or will come, till evil falls upon them, and it is too late to escape. "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them; and they shall not escape."* And they only are safe, who watch and keep their garments, and see and adore his hand and presence, in all his works of terror and wrath. "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

* 1 Thess. v. 3.

trembling. Kiſs the Son, leſt he be angry, and ye periſh from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Bleſſed are all they that put their truſt in Him."*

It is of the greateſt importance to chriſtians, who live at this day, and thoſe who ſhall live in the time when the battle ſhall come on, that they ſhould attend, and diſcern the ſigns of the times, and watch and keep their garments; as this is the only way to be ſafe and happy. Our Lord gave the ſame direction and command, as to ſubſtance, when he was on earth, with reference to theſe ſame events: "Take heed to yourſelves, leſt at any time your hearts be overcharged with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs, and cares of this life, and that day come upon you unawares. For as a ſnare ſhall it come on all them who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to eſcape all thoſe things that ſhall come to paſs, and to ſtand before the Son of man."†

IT will probably be ſuggeſted, that the repreſentation of ſuch a dark ſcene, and evil time, to take place before the Millennium will come, is matter of great diſcouragement, and tends to damp the ſpirits and hopes of chriſtians, and to diſcourage them from attempting to promote it, or praying for it; eſpecially as it is ſet ſo far off from our day: So that none in this or the next generation are like to ſee it.

To ſuch ſuggeſtions it is eaſy to reply,

1. If it be true, and clearly and abundantly foretold, that ſuch evils are to take place, before the proſperous ſtate of the church comes on, it is proper and deſirable that all ſhould know it, and attend to it, and it cannot be of any diſadvantage to any, to know the truth in this caſe, but the contrary. This is revealed to the church for the inſtruction and benefit of chriſtians, that they may be informed and warned of what is coming, and be prepared for it, and not be diſappointed in their expectations, and ſurpriſed when it ſhall take place; but when they ſee theſe things coming to paſs, their faith may be ſtrengthened, and they lift up their heads and rejoice, knowing that the redemption, the deliverance and proſperity of the church draweth near.

2. Theſe evils, both natural and moral, however undeſirable and dreadful, in themſelves, are neceſſary for the greateſt good of the

* Pſalm ii. 10, 11, 12. † Luke xxi. 34, 35, 36.

the church of Chriſt, and to introduce the Millennium in the beſt manner, and there will be then, and forever, more holineſs, joy and happineſs, than if theſe evils had never taken place. In this view, they are kind and merciful diſpenſations to the church. The Apoſtles and Prophets, and all the inhabitants of heaven, are repreſented as rejoicing in the evils, the puniſhment and deſtruction of the enemies of Chriſt and his church.* The affliction and ſervitude of the children of Iſrael in Egypt, and the wickedneſs, oppreſſion and cruelty exerciſed towards them by Pharaoh and the Egyptians; and the ſucceſſive calamities and puniſhments brought on them by the hand of God, and their final overthrow and deſtruction in the Red Sea, were an unſpeakable advantage to the former, and afforded matter of joy and praiſe. Therefore, chriſtians may now not only acquieſce, but even rejoice in theſe events, as ordered by God for wiſe ends, and neceſſary, in order to the greateſt diſplay of his righteouſneſs and goodneſs, and to promote the beſt good and greateſt happineſs of his church.

3. God revealed to Abraham the evils which were coming on his poſterity in Egypt, previous to their deliverance and proſperity, and the wickedneſs and puniſhment of the Egyptians; not to diſcourage him, and ſink his ſpirit, but to ſupport and animate him, and ſtrengthen his faith; and this did not damp his joy; but in the view of the whole, he rejoiced. And Jeſus Chriſt foretold to his diſciples the great evils which were coming on them, upon the Jews, the church and the world, not to diſcourage and deject them, but that they might be forewarned, and expect them, ſo as not to be diſappointed when they came, but have their faith confirmed, and poſſeſs their ſouls in patience when the dark ſcene ſhould come on; and that they might be encouraged and rejoice, conſidering theſe events as tokens that their deliverance was at hand. He therefore ſaid unto them, "And when theſe things begin to come to paſs, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."† This may be applied to chriſtians now. While you ſee the world gathering to the battle of the great day of God Almighty, and view this battle near at hand, lift up your heads and rejoice, that the church has got ſo near the end of darkneſs and affliction; and that the happy day of her deliverance and proſperity is ſo near at hand.

4. As

* Rev. xviii. 20. xix. 1—6. † Luke xxi. 28.

4. As to the diſtance of that happy day of ſalvation from this time; two hundred years, or near ſo many, will paſs off before it will arrive, according to the calculation which has been made from ſcripture; ſo that none, now on the ſtage of life, will live to ſee and enjoy it on earth. But much may be done by chriſtians who live in this age, to promote its coming on in the proper time, by prayer, and promoting the intereſt of religion, and the converſion of ſinners: For that good day would not come, unleſs the cauſe of Chriſt be maintained to that time, and ſinners be converted to keep up the church, and prevent the total extinction of it. In order to this, thouſands muſt be converted, and there muſt be a ſucceſſion of profeſſing and real chriſtians down to that day. The doctrines, inſtitutions, and duties of chriſtianity, muſt be maintained; and there will doubtleſs be remarkable revivals of religion in many places, and knowledge will increaſe among true chriſtians, and there will be advances made in the purity of doctrines and worſhip, and all holy practice, by bringing all theſe nearer to the ſtandard of the holy ſcriptures: And the churches will be formed into a greater union with each other; being more and more conformed to the divine pattern, contained in the Bible. Here then is work enough to do, by thoſe who deſire and are looking for ſuch a day, to prepare the way for it, and it may be introduced in the proper time; and there is no want of encouragement to do it, even in this view, to be ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as they may know, that their labour will not be in vain in the Lord.*

And chriſtians may now have a great degree of enjoyment of that day, and joy in it, though they do not expect to live on earth till it ſhall come. True chriſtians are diſintereſted and benevolent to ſuch a degree, that they can enjoy and rejoice in the good of others, even thoſe who may live many ages hence, and in the good and proſperity of the church, and the advancement of the cauſe and kingdom of Chriſt in this world, though they ſhould not live to ſee it. The ſtronger their faith is, that this good day is coming, and the clearer and more conſtant view they have of it, and the more deſirable it appears to them, that there ſhould be ſuch a time; the higher enjoyment, and greater joy they will have in it, and in the proſpect of it. Thus Abraham looked forward by his faith, and ſaw this day of Chriſt, when all the nations of the earth

* 1 Cor. xv. 58.

earth ſhould be bleſſed in him, and derived great comfort and joy in this proſpect. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to ſee my day; and he ſaw it, and was glad."* Chriſtians know that it will come on in the beſt time, as ſoon as it can be introduced by infinite wiſdom and goodneſs: That there is no delay, but "God will haſten it in his time." In this ſenſe, Chriſt will come *quickly* to ſet up his kingdom in the whole world. He is on his way, coming as faſt and as ſoon as he can, conſiſtent with infinite wiſdom. He is preparing the way, and ordering every thing in the beſt manner, ſo as in the moſt proper time, to reign with his church on earth; and no time is loſt. And what chriſtian can deſire that it ſhould be ſooner, or before this time? Is it not enough that Jeſus Chriſt has undertaken it, and will bring it on in the beſt manner, and the fitteſt time? And muſt not this give joy to every real chriſtian?

It is farther to be obſerved, that though the chriſtians who live at this day, will not ſee the Millennium come while they are in the body on earth; yet they will ſee and enjoy it, when it ſhall come, in a much higher degree than they could do, were they living on earth; or than thoſe who will live on earth at that day. The powers, knowledge and views of the ſpirits of the juſt made perfect, are greatly enlarged in heaven, and they have a more clear and comprehenſive view of the works of God, and a more particular knowledge of what is done in this world, eſpecially of what relates to the work of redemption, the ſalvation of ſinners, and the proſperity of the church and cauſe of Chriſt. There is joy in the preſence of the angels over *one ſinner* that repenteth. The ſpirits of the juſt made perfect are with the angels, and muſt know all that paſſes in their preſence; and muſt rejoice in ſuch an event, as much or more than they. How great muſt be their joy then, when whole nations, yea, all the world, become true penitents, and they ſee and know this, and what is implied in it, unſpeakably to better advantage, and more clearly, than any can do who ſhall be then on earth!

The more chriſtians labour and ſuffer on earth, in the cauſe of Chriſt; and the more they deſire, pray for, and promote his coming and kingdom in this world, the more they will enjoy it in heaven, when it ſhall take place, and the greater will be their joy

* John viii. 56.

and happineſs. And it will be unſpeakably more and greater in heaven, than if they were in bodies on earth. Who then can reaſonably deſire to live in this world, merely to ſee and enjoy the happy day of the Millennium.

On the whole, it is hoped that it does appear from what has been ſaid in this diſſertation, that there will be a thouſand years of proſperity of the church of Chriſt, in this world; that this is abundantly foretold and held up to view in the Bible; that this will be about the ſeventh millenary of the world; that it will be a moſt happy and glorious day, in which the chriſtian diſpenſation ſhall have its proper and full effect on earth, in the ſalvation of men; to which all the preceding times and events are preparatory: That the degeneracy and increaſing prevalence of ignorance, error and wickedneſs now in the world, eſpecially in Chriſtendom, is preparing for, and haſtening on the battle of that great day of God Almighty, in which mankind will be puniſhed, and the greateſt part then on earth deſtroyed; and then the Millennium will be introduced:—That this is an important and pleaſing ſubject, ſuited to ſupport and comfort chriſtians in all the dark and evil days which precede it, and to excite them to earneſt, conſtant, united prayer for this coming of Chriſt, and patient waiting for him, and to conſtant exertions in all proper ways, to promote his intereſt and kingdom in the world.

AFTER the thouſand years of the reign of Chriſt and his church on earth, "Satan ſhall be looſed out of his priſon, and ſhall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: The number of whom is as the ſand of the ſea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compaſſed the camp of the ſaints about, and the beloved city: And fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them."* In theſe words there is reference to what is ſaid of Gog and Magog, in the thirty eighth and thirty ninth chapters of Ezekiel: Which prophecy, there is reaſon to think, is not to be underſtood literally, but in a figurative ſenſe; as no events have ever taken place anſwerable to this repreſentation, if taken in a literal ſenſe. The prophecy of Gog and Magog, may

* Rev. xx. 7, 8, 9.

may be conſidered as having reference to two events, which are to take place at different times, and are ſimilar in ſome reſpects, and differ in others, viz. The great and general corruption and wickedneſs of mankind, and their puniſhment and deſtruction which will precede the Millennium, which has been deſcribed in this ſection; and the apoſtacy and wickedneſs of mankind at the end of the Millennium, and the remarkable overthrow and deſtruction of them, when Chriſt ſhall come to judgment; predicted in the words which have been now tranſcribed. Some things ſaid of Gog and Magog, of their deſigns, doings, and their puniſhment, and a number of expreſſions in that prophecy, are more applicable to the former of theſe events than to the latter, and ſome more applicable to the latter than to the former, and the whole cannot be well applied to one, excluſive of the other; but in both, the prophecy is completely fulfilled. Both theſe events reſpect wicked men, who have arrived to a great degree of obſtinacy and wickedneſs; and they are both gathered together by the agency and deception of ſatan, let looſe for that end. And they are both gathered together to battle againſt Chriſt and his church; and are deſtroyed in the battle.

This prophecy is figurative. It is not to be ſuppoſed that all this great multitude will be gathered together into one place; or that the church will be encamped together in one ſpot on earth, or collected in one city: But the gathering of the wicked, means their being abandoned to infidelity, and a very great degree of wickedneſs, in oppoſition to the church of Chriſt, and true religion, and being diſpoſed to extirpate theſe from the face of the earth. In this ſenſe, the wicked will be gathered together to battle, before the Millennium, by the ſpirits of devils, or ſatan, who will go forth to the whole world for that end, as has been explained. The church will become ſmall, and ſurrounded and aſſaulted by the wicked on every ſide, and ready to be ſwallowed up, and totally deſtroyed by them.

It has been a queſtion, from whence this multitude of people, here called Gog and Magog, ſhould come, after the church of Chriſt and true religion had prevailed in the world a thouſand years? Some have ſuppoſed, that a number of people, and perhaps whole nations, would live in ſome corner of the earth, during

the time of the Millennium, without partaking of any of the bleſſings of it; but will continue in a ſtate of heatheniſm and wickedneſs all that time, till at length they will multiply ſo much, as to be able to riſe in oppoſition to the church, and deſtroy it, were they not prevented by the miraculous interpoſition of heaven. And many have ſuppoſed, that this fact is inconſiſtent with all the inhabitants of the world being real chriſtians, and eminently holy in the time of the Millennium. But this ſuppoſed difficulty may be eaſily ſolved; and the general and great apoſtacy accounted for, conſiſtent with the ſuppoſition, that in the Millennium all mankind will be real chriſtians. Near the end of the thouſand years, the divine influences, which produced and continued the univerſal and eminent holineſs in the Millennium, may be in ſuch a meaſure withheld, as that real chriſtians will, in their exerciſes and conduct, ſink much below what had taken place before, and indulge a careleſs and worldly ſpirit to a great and ſinful degree, and become more and more negligent of their duty, eſpecially with reſpect to their children; and be really guilty of breaking covenant with God, in this important point. In conſequence of this, their children will not be regenerated and converted; but grow up in a ſtate of ſin, real enemies to God and to the truth. And as the world will be then full of people, it will in this way ſoon become full of wicked men, and the church will be very ſmall. And thoſe who will grow up under the power of ſin and ſatan, in the face of all that light, truth and holineſs, which had taken place through the Millennium, and in oppoſition to it, will naturally arrive to a great and amazing degree of hardneſs and obſtinacy in ſin, and become a far more guilty and perverſe generation of men, than ever exiſted before; and will be greater enemies to truth and righteouſneſs, and the church of Chriſt. And conſequently will be united and engaged to baniſh all theſe from the earth. The world will have more wicked perſons in it than ever before; and all theſe much more ſinful, and engaged in all kinds and ways of oppoſition to Chriſt and his cauſe and people. The church will be on the brink of ruin, juſt ready to ſink and be ſwallowed up; and the appearance and coming of Chriſt will be leſs believed, expected or thought of, than at any other time. Then Chriſt will be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them who know not God, and obey not the goſpel.

This

This apoſtacy and great wickedneſs of ſo many millions of mankind, the number of whom will be as the ſand of the ſea, and their conſequent miſery, is an awful diſpenſation indeed, and is, in itſelf, an evil infinitely beyond the comprehenſion of man. But there is the cleareſt evidence, and the greateſt certainty, that this inſtance of evil, as well as all other evil which precedes it, and will ſucceed it, though it will be endleſs, will, by the overruling hand of God, be productive of overbalancing good; and is neceſſary, in order to effect the greateſt poſſible good to the univerſe. "*Surely* the wrath of man ſhall praiſe thee: The remainder of wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain."* This event will ſerve to ſet the total depravity, and the ſtrong propenſity of man to the greateſt degree of wickedneſs, in a more clear and ſtriking light than it had been, or perhaps could be before. That man ſhould apoſtatize, and ſo ſoon arrive to ſuch a high degree of wickedneſs, after all the light and holineſs, and the wonderful goodneſs of God to man, diſplayed in the Millennium; and, in oppoſition to all this light and grace, and in the greateſt abuſe of it, join in rebellion againſt God, and trample on his authority, truth and goodneſs, contrary to the admonitions and warnings from the word of God, and all faithful miniſters and chriſtians; will make a new diſcovery, and greater than was ever made before, of fallen human nature, and of the great and deſperate evil that is in the heart of man; and that it is utterly incurable by any means that can poſſibly be uſed, ſhort of the almighty energy of the Spirit of God, by which the heart is renewed; and conſequently of the guilt and infinite ill deſert of man; which diſcovery will be of great advantage to the church and kingdom of Chriſt forever, and neceſſary for the greateſt happineſs and glory of it, and the higheſt honour of the Redeemer.

And this will make, from fact, a new and greater diſcovery of the abſolute dependence of man on the grace and Spirit of God, to prevent his greateſt wickedneſs and endleſs deſtruction, and to form him to holineſs and happineſs; and of the great and ſovereign grace of God, in converting and ſaving loſt man, and in bringing on ſuch a wonderful degree of holineſs and happineſs, and continuing it a thouſand years; and that this is all to be aſcribed to the ſovereign power and grace of God, who has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

When

* Pſalm lxxvi. 10.

When all men ſhall be righteous and holy from generation to generation for a thouſand years, and all the children which ſhall be born in that time, ſhall appear to be pious and holy as ſoon as they begin to act, and perſevere in this to the end of life, the appearance will be, that mankind are now grown better, and that the evil nature of man is not ſo great; but he is naturally inclined to obedience and holineſs: The ſudden and great apoſtacy which will take place, will take off this appearance; and ſhow, that the heart of man is naturally as full of evil as ever it was; and that all the good and holineſs of the Millennium ſtate, was the effect of the power of the Spirit of God, and to be wholly aſcribed to the infinite, ſovereign grace of God. And this diſcovery will be remembered by the redeemed forever, and improved to the glory of God, to the praiſe of rich, ſovereign grace, and conſequently to their own eternal advantage.

EVEN ſo, come LORD JESUS.

AMEN.

ERRATA.

Page 14,	line 10,	for *moon* read *men*	Page 61,	line 13,	for *moral* read *natural*
15,	14 from bot.	for *by* r. *of* Chriſt	66,	6,	for *profeſs* r. *poſſeſs*
25,	17,	for *foretold* r. *foretell*	68,	11 from bot.	for *profeſſing* r. *poſſeſſing*
54,	4 from bot.	for *virtuous* r. *victorious*	87,	21,	dele *not*